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The Week

THE Mississippi disaster has passed its most critical stage, according to Secretary Hoover. While some additional districts will be inundated, and 30,000 persons had still to be removed to safety at the beginning of this week, the main task of rescue is nearing its end. How huge it has been is shown by Mr. Hoover's statement that the flood has affected 700,000 persons, of whom 600,000 are left virtually destitute. Fortunately, the waters had begun to recede in the north before the climax had been reached in the south, and the Red Cross has not had to care for all the refugees at once. However, its eighty camps have held 340,000 persons, and an additional 250,000 have been fed and cared for elsewhere. The organization has asked the public to contribute an additional $2,000,000, bringing the total flood relief fund to $16,000,000. The federal government has spent about $5,000,000 more. This brings the expenditure per refugee to about $30—certainly a very low figure, considering the enormous task which is involved.

SECRETARY Hoover explains what is being done to put farmers of the inundated regions on their feet once more. In three states, finance corporations have been formed with capital, locally subscribed, to the extent of $500,000 each. By means of rediscount privileges, the effectiveness of this sum in increased to about $6,000,000. Secretary Hoover asks the public to invest another $2,000,000 in the shares of these corporations, which would give a total limit of about $14,000,000. He is loyally trying to uphold the hands of President Coolidge who, for purely personal and political reasons, is determined that there shall be no special session of Congress. It is by no means certain that the Red Cross will raise its last $2,000,000, or the public invest the extra sum required in the corporations' shares. But even if both these things happen, Mr. Hoover can hardly claim that an effective capital of $14,000,000, based on cash subscriptions of $3,500,000, is enough to put a population of 700,000 back at work. The sum required is in all probability far larger than this. We do not see how President Coolidge can much longer avoid meeting this problem. Either he must show where the money is to come from or he must call a special session of Congress for the purpose of voting an appropriation.

SENATOR David A. Reed's revelation of the administration's intention (probably for campaign purposes) to reduce income-tax rates by $300,000,000 next year is full of economic fallacies. If, this year, it is good policy to apply a surplus estimated at $600,000,000 to reduction of the public debt, why will it be good policy to cut taxes next year, when the surplus will undoubtedly be smaller? Senator Reed's statement that lower rates have brought larger yields in the past is erroneous; larger yields have resulted in spite of lower rates, and because of increased prosperity arising from other causes. But prosperity in 1927 is surely no greater than in 1925 or 1926; indeed, Mr. Reed himself says that we are now enjoying "profitless prosperity" . . . "there are plenty of orders, but no one is making any money, due to low prices." While this must be taken with a whole shaker-full of salt, it is true that profits in 1927 will scarcely remain at

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the 1926 level. Thus there is indeed a poor case for any reduction in rates. And if a reduction is to be made, there are a whole series of good arguments against abolishing the federal inheritance tax or cutting maximum surtaxes to 10 percent. The Senator affirms that this will release more money for private investment in trade and business ventures. But what good would that do, if the markets are already so fully supplied that prices have sunk to unprofitable levels? What would seem to be needed at present would be, not additional investment in productive capital, but more purchasing power in the hands of the government and individual consumers. To cap the climax of absurdities, Senator Reed, in an aside, calls British unemployment insurance a failure which has taught us a lesson by showing us what not to do. It is fearful to contemplate what might have happened to Britain in these years of her depression without this insurance for her enforced idle. Does the Senator make the fatuous assumption that we shall never have a serious unemployment problem because we have not insured against it?

IN an extraordinary speech to the Italian Chamber of Deputies, Mussolini has hurled his gauntlet in the face of the world. He sees a great European war coming in 1935 or 1940. In order that Italy may do her part, he demands by that time an army of 5,000,000 men and a vastly greater navy and air force than at present. Moreover, he urges that Italy increase her population so that by 1950 her present 40,000,000 will have become 60,000,000. "I affirm," he says, "that the fundamental, if not the absolutely essential datum, for the political and therefore the economic and moral power of nations is their ability to increase their population," which is certainly as vicious nonsense as was ever uttered by the responsible head of a great state. Who is to be Italy's opponent in this coming war? Mussolini makes two nominations. Observing that Locarno is now dead, and that the signatories of the agreements there consummated are now arming with all possible haste, he suggests that a league of the democratic countries may attack the Fascist state. An alternative foe might be a union of all the German peoples. It is true that 1935 is fairly far away, and a prediction of war then is less menacing than the announcement of a conflict next month or next year. At the same time, the spirit of his whole speech is so reckless, so full of archaic imperialism, that we do not see how anyone can read it and fail to be impressed by the incessant danger to European peace when such an individual is at the head of a great state.

IF Mussolini's announcement is to be taken as a serious statement of Italian policy, rather than mere braggadocio, it indicates his certain fall from power, some time in the course of his adventure. Italy's main necessity is to support her present population adequately on the slender resources which nature and history have bequeathed her. The Mussolini regime has chosen to attempt to do so by a policy of economic nationalism—with protective tariffs, encouragement of domestic manufacture, and all the rest. This is a perilous experiment at best, which just now is passing through a dangerous period of business depression and deflation accompanying the stabilization of the lira. A marked increase in population, plus a heavy expenditure in non-productive military establishments, plus a provocative international policy, is sure to make it fail. Perhaps Mussolini harbors the idea that his domestic difficulties can be overcome by a war of conquest which will lay tribute on richer territories and peoples. To imagine that such a war could end in victory, backed by the meager Italian resources, is a fantastic enough delusion. But to suppose that victory could possibly bring an increase in wealth to the victor, in a world characterized by an international economy, is sheer insanity, and after the experience of the last decade could arise only in a mind ruled by a mad thirst for self-aggrandizement.

THE Japanese are sending several thousand troops to the Shantung Peninsula "for the purpose of protecting the lives and property of her citizens there," in the case that Chiang Kai-shek's army should prove unexpectedly successful in its drive to the north. The Chinese protest that this action by Japan is a violation of treaty rights, and the foreign correspondents in Peking have been thrown into a flutter by it. They allege that Japan intends once more to seize the Shantung Peninsula. It may be that there is an element in Japan which regrets the restoration of the territory to China and would like to see that action undone. But it is impossible to suppose that such can be the serious intention of the present government. When Japan relinquished Shantung, she did so under the pressure of unanimous and world-wide opinion. That opinion would be even more vigorous today, and to the same effect. Moreover, the fundamental fact in the present policy of Japan is her endeavor to retain the friendship of the Chinese people. It was this which caused her, despite the utmost pressure, to refuse the use of armed force against Hankow and Nanking. The seizure of Shantung would be regarded by the Chinese of north and south alike as a worse blow to their national sovereignty than any which has yet occurred. The comment in the Japanese press on the movement of troops to Shantung supports the view that the action is what it pretends to be, and nothing more.

M. BRIAND'S proposal for a treaty forever outlawing war between France and the United States has begun to bear fruit. A draft text of such a treaty has now been prepared by two of the leading authorities in this field—Professor

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James T. Shotwell and Professor Joseph P. Chamberlain, both of Columbia University. A similar model text, the authorship of which is not disclosed, has been made public by the American Peace Award, the organization which was formed to award the Bok peace prize. The treaties are not dissimilar in their central ideas. They prohibit any resort to arms, and provide, instead, machinery for arbitration or conciliation. The Shotwell-Chamberlain draft, in particular, has been carefully drawn to satisfy all legitimate American desires. It specifies immigration and citizenship as domestic questions. It takes into account our special position under the Monroe Doctrine. Its language is borrowed in part from the Locarno treaties, and in part from our existing arbitration treaties. While it was written with France in mind, there is no reason why it should not be used for other countries as well, and notably, Japan. As many American Presidents have discovered to their sorrow, it is easier to prepare a treaty than to get it adopted. At the same time, M. Briand's invitation clearly showed that the French government is in a receptive frame of mind toward a proposal for a treaty with the United States which would outlaw war, perhaps as a substitute for the present arbitration treaty which expires February 27, 1928. A beginning must be made sooner or later; and there is no good reason for delay.

AS readers of the New Republic are aware, the Pullman porters and maids have formed a union, in the effort to ameliorate the hard conditions, as to both wages and hours, under which they operate. How this effort is being fought is illustrated by an incident which took place in Jacksonville, Florida, last week. An organizer, whose only crimes were his effort to recruit members for the union, and his distributing copies of The Messenger, its official organ, was haled into court and ordered to leave town. We should be much interested if someone in Jacksonville could answer several questions for us. Is it a crime to attempt to organize a union in that city? Would similar treatment have been meted out if all the individuals concerned had been white men? And what relation does the Pullman Company bear to the city administration?

WHEN the Interstate Commerce Commission reduced railroad rates on coal from Pennsylvania and Ohio to the Lake ports, giving them a differential of forty-five cents a ton over the more distant West Virginia and other Southern fields, it removed one great cause of the depression which has been afflicting the central coal mines. Since these mines have been union strongholds, while the West Virginia mines have not, it also removed one of the causes of the decline of union production. On this account the rejoicing both of the Pennsylvania operators and of the union leaders is justified. It is all the more gratifying that the decision came from a Commission without the prejudice which would have been alleged against it had President Coolidge's appointment as Commissioner of Cyrus E. Woods of Pennsylvania been confirmed. While this case was pending, the appointment of Mr. Woods, who was both a Pennsylvanian and closely associated with the coal industry, was highly improper.

THE economic problem underlying the coal-rate case was slightly more complicated, however, than the rivalry between the Pennsylvania and the West Virginia fields would imply. There has long been a school of thought which justified the practice of granting disproportionately low rates for long hauls, on the ground that by enlarging the supply of a commodity seeking its sale in a given market it increased competition, and so benefited the consumer. The flaw in this argument is, that to encourage the carrying from a distance of a commodity which can be obtained near at hand is economic waste, the cost of which must eventually be borne by somebody—if not by consumers of coal, then by consumers of something else. It is sound practice to adjust rates to costs, as has been done in this instance. If the result is to raise prices through lessening competition, some other protection for the consumer must be found. That this, rather than juggling with railroad rates, may be the real problem of the future, is indicated by the recent furious speculation in coal shares which, it is rumored, portends extensive consolidation in the bituminous industry. Even at present, large firms control mines in several fields, and consequently competition among fields is scarcely to be relied upon.

FORTY-THREE important railroad systems report net incomes for April, 1927, less than their return for April, 1926, by 17.1 percent. This is only to a slight degree attributable to decreased business, the gross revenues of the same roads having fallen off during the same period by two-tenths of 1 percent. An increase in expenses is the main cause. This may arise in part from the Southern floods, but only in part, because most of the roads concerned do not tap the territory in question, and the downward tendency was perceptible before the floods became serious. The main cause is undoubtedly that the roads have been forced to share their recent prosperity with their employees by wage advances, which were amply justified in view of standards of living and the recompense of other workers in the nation. This year, in spite of scarcely decreased volume of traffic, the roads will probably not equal their record of 1926, when they had the most prosperous year they have seen or are likely to see for a long time. It is therefore noteworthy that in 1926 their average return barely equaled the 5.75 percent which the Interstate Commerce Commission has fixed as fair, on its tentative valuation of the railroads. If the carriers can earn a fair average return on valuation only in a highly prosperous

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year, what would happen if that valuation were boosted by ten or fifteen billion, as the roads desire? Obviously, a marked increase in rates would be necessary; and even this might not bring the "fair return," because it might easily restrict the activity of industries on whose prosperity traffic depends.

THERE never was anything like it; one feels—rashly, perhaps—that there never will again. One month ago, he was unknown; today, he is the most famous man on earth. Whenever he appears in public, his life is at once in danger from the adoring mob. Let his airplane land, the fences are smashed, police tossed aside, motor cars damaged as if by a cyclone. The cablegrams, with which half a dozen clerks cannot keep pace, accumulate in bushel baskets; his mail is an avalanche. More and worse poetry has been written because of what he did than on any other occasion in history. Movie offers continue to pour in, each $100,000 larger than the last; kings and presidents break down and cry when they learn that he cannot visit them. His triumphal procession around America bids fair to last for some years; and, if he survives the banquets, the handshakers are certain to get him.

FOR our part, we rejoice in the whole episode, even when, as sometimes happens, it becomes a little maudlin. In this case, it is clear that Demos applauds the doer, not the deed. After all, the Atlantic has been flown before; the hop from Newfoundland to Ireland eight years ago was fully comparable to the New York-to-Paris jump in 1927. The adulation, obviously, is for the St. George of the skies. It comes because he is young, is charming, modest, simple; because, without much money or many friends, he did alone what other men had failed to do with powerful organization behind them. For once, we have a hero who lives up to the most critical standards; never yet has he failed to do and say the right thing, in circumstances which constitute the cruelest, most searching test conceivable. Lucky Lindbergh? On the contrary; lucky world!

Militant Communism vs. Die-Hard Toryism

THE decision of the British government to terminate its trade agreement with Russia, and to break off diplomatic relations, is a political event of incalculable and of sinister importance. It has every appearance of a retrogressive step which will intensify the existing causes of friction and hostility among the European nations and delay their economic and political recovery from the shock and the privations of the War. Until this rupture occurred, European international relations since 1919 had moved in the direction of appeasement. Ireland and England, Germany and France, Italy and France, France and England, Russia and the rest of Europe, were on the whole tending to live together more amicably. But now suddenly Great Britain precipitates a quarrel which undoes an important part of this improvement. Its government once again placards Soviet Russia as an outlaw with whom it is vain to seek any fair and reasonable accommodation. So far as the British and the Americans are concerned, the Russians must either explicitly agree to abandon Communist agitation or they must forfeit any orderly relation to the capitalist countries of Europe and America. The rupture recreates a conflict which, if it is continued, will call either for war against Russia or revolution in Russia.

The immediate result of the break will depend upon the repercussion of the action of Great Britain upon the policy toward Russia of the other European governments. If France and Italy follow Great Britain in severing diplomatic relations, certain consequences will follow and the stage will be set for a conflict of one kind. In that event, the danger of friction with Germany would be much increased. The German government has not the slightest intention of following the lead of Great Britain. German industry is very much in need of Russian patronage, and, if the western powers break with Russia, it will be entitled to a larger share of the existing business. Moreover, the German foreign office is obliged to maintain friendly relations with Russia. Germany cannot afford to be left utterly isolated in case she is unable to negotiate permanent peace with the Allies. The policy of Rapallo is just as important for a country in Germany's position as the policy of Locarno. Consequently, if the western powers agree to outlaw Russia, and if they press Germany to join them, she will be obliged to refuse, no matter what the consequences of the refusal will be. Germany is the physical link between eastern and western Europe, and, in her present condition of military impotence, she cannot afford to bear the brunt of a feud of the west with Communist Russia. For if, as a consequence of British hostility, Soviet Russia loses everything which it has gained of late years in the way of an improved diplomatic status, its rulers will draw the conclusion that no accommodation is possible. They will be driven in the future to behave like outlaws, which would mean a calculated attempt on their part to intensify Communist fanaticism, and to redirect it against their most vulnerable enemy, which would be Germany. Friendship with Russia may be a luxury to the western powers, but it is a necessity to the German and, be it added, to the Polish peoples.

On the other hand, if France and Italy maintain their official relations with Russia, the consequences of the British enmity will not only be less serious, but may even be beneficial to the greater part of

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Europe. In that event, Stalin and the other Commissars who seek to accommodate Communism to capitalism will have every reason to mold Russian policy toward the rest of the world in a conciliatory and inoffensive direction and to satisfy their more bellicose followers by turning them loose on the British Empire—particularly upon its outlying dependencies in China and India. A policy of accommodation would, of course, result in the multiplication of political and economic ties with the continent of Europe and a strengthening of the existing motives for pursuing an opportunist policy. The Communist leaders are not sure of the goal toward which they are headed. If they are to be civilized, they need to be placed on their good behavior. Some of them would even prefer it. It provides them with weapons against Zinoviev *et al.* The rupture with Great Britain, if it does not go any further, will force them to behave well toward all their European neighbors except Great Britain.

The British government had to be sure of an excellent moral and legal excuse for the break. Russian agents had abused the hospitality which had been extended to them, by doing what they could to injure the interests and undermine the authority of the British Empire. But the British cabinet was, none the less, probably unwise in taking advantage of the excellence of its case. For the penalty does not fit the crime. Nor will it prevent the crime from being sedulously repeated. In so far as the welfare and the safety of the British Empire were formerly exposed to Communist agitation, they are still exposed. The government has, by the break, diminished to a slight extent the opportunity which the Russians formerly enjoyed of conducting their subversive propaganda, but it has intensified their motive to do their worst, and it has undermined the opposition in Moscow to the complete domination in the future of Russian policy toward Great Britain by a maleficent motive. The diplomatic rupture may, consequently, in spite of the best intentions to the contrary, easily lead to still more strained relations and to the necessity for a still more vigorous and costly offensive by Great Britain against her inaccessible enemy.

If it is true, however, that the British government has acted with poor judgment in pushing the Russian Communists in the direction of militancy without apparently arranging to carry on an effective war against them, it is no less true that the policy of Soviet Russia is even less realistic. As Mr. Isaac Don Levine points out elsewhere in this issue, the Russian Communists in their dealings with capitalist countries really have no consistent or intelligible policy. They are continually proposing loans and soliciting trade agreements from other countries, while at the same time they do not abandon an offensive propaganda against the welfare of the nations whose coöperation they are demanding. They must realize that they cannot indefinitely carry on such a suicidally contradictory policy. In the long run, they will have to decide whether they are going to wage war or make peace with their capitalist neighbors. But for the present they are trying it out both ways, and when they use the opportunities which the trade agreements themselves furnish for the purpose of carrying on war, it is no wonder that fair-dealing Englishmen succumb to irritation and kick them out.

The truth is that the ruling classes both in Great Britain and Russia are the victims of morbid compulsions which betray them into experimenting with inconsequential and contradictory policies. The cooler heads in the Kremlin recognize that, as a government which is responsible for the welfare of the Russian people, the Soviet Republic must accommodate its behavior to the interests and standards of the rest of the world and in this way obtain the benefit of frank and confidential intercourse with other nations. They would, on this basis, have a fair chance of obtaining the financial and economic assistance which Russia needs, while at the same time preserving their existing party dictatorship, and not lowering the red flag of aggressive socialism. But, unfortunately, they have preached Communism, not as a state policy whose success depends upon the devising and the practice of a flexible and realistic technique, but as an exclusive and absolute faith which is engaged in mortal combat with all existing political and economic systems. The morale of the Communist party in Russia has come to depend in part on the irreconcilable affirmation of this faith. Whenever the more politically minded members of the government propose in good faith to reach some partial accommodation, Communist Jacobinism breaks out elsewhere in the party, and makes every attempt at adjustment look like treachery. The handful of Communists who rule Russia are almost driven to play it both ways by the inherent contradiction between the necessity of keeping the sacred fire of Communism burning on the shrine of Lenin's tomb and the necessity of carrying on with some success the essentially methodical and realistic business of governing a great modern European nation. They cannot at present escape from this contradiction without trying to reform the Communist philosophy, and without running the risk of fomenting irreconcilable discussion within the party.

The impotence of the Communist leaders in Russia to devise a policy for a government which is playing with revolution and non-revolution at the same time is scarcely a matter for surprise. Far more surprising and significant are the symptoms of an analogous infirmity in the conscience of the experienced, long-established and thoroughly opportunist British ruling class. Among the British Tories, also, there are grave dissensions about the essential nature of the policy which their leaders should impose upon the state. The Prime Minister himself and a few of his colleagues, when they assumed office, hoped to convert their party into an

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instrument of constructive liberalism. As they saw it, the old opposition between Conservatism and Liberalism had disappeared. They wished the Conservatives to try to perpetuate the usefulness of the institutions of the country by themselves proposing and contriving those economic and political reforms which an instructed public opinion was coming to demand. But Mr. Baldwin found his party composed of inert and recalcitrant material. Both in domestic and foreign affairs, the ordinary British Tory instinctively prefers, not a policy of constructive adjustments, but a policy of doing nothing and of defying or, if possible, coercing the agitators for reform. The Tories invited the general strike by their irresponsible handling of the grievances of the coal miners, and they are now using the offense of the general strike as a sufficient excuse for weakening the legal position of the trades unions and the Labor party. In foreign affairs they have much preferred an aggressive military policy in opposition to the nationalist revolution in China, but they have not dared to undertake the expense single-handed. But, being frustrated in this, their natural way of being aggressive, they have expressed their discomfiture and their sheer combativeness by forcing Baldwin and Chamberlain to break with the Russians, to whom they impute responsibility for British misfortunes in China.

This British Tory party is just as much at a loss for a policy which will conserve existing institutions, without injuring the community, as the Russian Communist party is for a policy which will both strengthen a socialist government in Russia and promote revolution against capitalist governments in Europe, Asia and America. No Marxian has invented, as yet, a technique for militant socialism, if and when combined with the responsibilities of national government, but die-hard Toryism seems to be equally maladjusted to the realities of a modern industrial society. Its traditional methods are as inept and dangerous to the welfare of a modern society which is suffering from a strain as is subversive Communist propaganda. These traditional methods are made up of a combination of resisting the needed reforms and of defying or coercing the reformers. They serve well enough the purpose of the Republicans in the United States, because we are as prosperous now as Great Britain was thirty years ago. But they only increase the troubles of the British Empire. The leaders of the Tory party in England, by legislating against the trades unions and by breaking with Soviet Russia, have, like the Communist leaders in Moscow, in their impotence and fear given way to a psychological compulsion which drives them into acts of futile, feeble and romantic defiance. They have expressed, by their counter-offensive against their adversaries, irritation and apprehension rather than self-confidence and a realistic understanding of the problem of protecting the interests and welfare of the Empire. British Tory statesmen simply do not know what to do with such unprecedented challenges as a sick coal industry, a Chinese national revolution or the hostility of a state which, instead of declaring war, systematically undermines the loyalty of Britain's own disaffected subjects. Formerly, they would themselves have insisted on fighting, but now they cannot afford the luxury of coercing China or Russia, and, in any event, they are dealing with foes who have protected themselves against the assault of armies and navies. But what is a good Tory, who knows he is right, to do with dangerous enemies when he cannot compel them to behave well? So far, the British Tories have not invented any answer to this question, except to coerce the Russians, the Chinese and the labor unions into behaving still worse.

Oil in Troubled Waters

THE "coöperative" agreement of all except one of the important oil producers in the Seminole pool to restrict production is a phenomenon which needs to be closely examined. Agreements to restrict production are ordinarily illegal in the United States; we have based our law and most of our thinking about economic matters on the proposition that, under unrestricted private enterprise, the only protection to the consumer lies in competition, which tends to keep prices down. The reasons assigned by the oil men for the present action sound strange in the light of this conception. There is a crisis in the industry, due to overproduction. Over a half-billion barrels are in storage. Prices have fallen until mid-continent crude is selling in the neighborhood of a dollar a barrel, and the average tank-wagon price of gasoline in fifty cities is below sixteen cents. Though production of most of the large pools is falling, Seminole, which came into production in 1926, has flooded the market with its 325,000 barrels daily. Therefore, with the tacit approval of the governments of the United States and Oklahoma, the operators make an agreement and appoint an arbiter with plenary powers to reduce production by any reasonable method. The sole apparent aim is to decrease the supply above ground and so to raise prices.

Farmers who have a surplus of wheat or cotton may look with envy upon this procedure. Because the important oil producers do not number more than a score or two, and because they have plenty of resources, they are apparently able to accomplish a result which the millions of farmers cannot achieve, and were solemnly lectured by President Coolidge for trying (by a somewhat different method) to achieve. We do not know whether what the oil producers are doing is technically unlawful or not, but we do know that at other times and in other circumstances, if it were pronounced lawful, Congress would speedily have been forced to pass a law forbidding it. Farmers and others

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who cannot themselves restrict production, but who are directly interested in low prices for gasoline, would have seen to that. In view of Mr. Mellon's lectures to the farmers about trying to raise their own prices, it is not strange that his Gulf Company is not a party to the Seminole agreement.

Why is there not more stir about the oil restriction? Chiefly because most of the experts who have studied the industry, including the Federal Oil Conservation Board, have seen that competition is not only the bane of the industry, but in the long run is likely to injure the public as well. Mineral oil was made for us centuries ago, by processes not likely to be soon repeated, in definitely limited quantities. In the United States we are rapidly approaching the limit of the probable domestic supply. Competitive processes of extraction, with numerous interests trying to capture the store in a given pool as rapidly as possible, resemble angling by a hundred fishermen each of whom is trying to catch all the trout in a given stream before the others get ahead of him. You have the wasteful expense of unnecessary effort and equipment. You have the cost of unnecessary storage above ground —now estimated to run about $130,000,000 a year. Worst of all, you have the waste of the oil itself, through hasty methods of recovery which irretrievably lose a large part of the oil and gas in the ground, through evaporation and fire in storage, and through encouragement of inefficient refining methods. A check on competition in production, if it is effective, should therefore help to eliminate the enormous waste in oil extraction, storage and refining, thus conserving more of this valuable resource for the future.

It is ironical, however, that the pleas of the experts that waste should be eliminated as a conservation measure have passed almost unheeded by the industry. As long as it was making a satisfactory profit, and as long as the available supply of the country seemed in imminent danger of becoming so depleted as not to equal the demand, the oil producers appeared not to care in the least how much oil was being wasted or how much that waste cost the consumer. The main point was to make as much money as possible while the game lasted. What has brought about the anxiety to restrict competition is a sudden accession to the visible supply and the consequent fall in price. For a time it was thought that 1925 might see the peak of oil production in this country. But in 1926, three new pools came in—Spindle Top, Panhandle and Seminole. The first two, after rapid spurts upward, began to decline just before the first of the year. But Seminole kept on rising, and now furnishes approximately one-eighth the total production in the United States. Worse than this, new resources have been discovered in western Texas which are reported to be much larger than any in sight in the previous history of the industry. This does not mean that we need stop thinking about future supplies of oil. The output of pools can decline as rapidly as it can shoot up, and there is no inexhaustible array of new pools. Conservation is still highly desirable. But it does mean that we ought not to be too ready to allow the industry to seek its goal of increased prices simply because its activities involve some elimination of waste. Oil producers are not suddenly regenerate and ready to follow a thorough-going conservation program; they are simply worried about profits.

Restriction of oil production, whether by agreement or other form of monopoly, ought to be applied to the extent that it enables the elimination of waste. Wasteful competition ought to be prevented. Such action, desirable in any industry, is doubly desirable in one which deals in an exhaustible resource. But it is a question whether the public can entrust this function without control to those private interests which stand to profit from exploitation of the purchaser. If the public permits restriction, it should exact a *quid pro quo*. It should at the same time make sure that waste really is eliminated, and it should control prices and profits. We cannot afford to exchange competition for monopoly without providing adequate safeguards for the consumer.

The Movie and the Masses

THE American motion picture is a truly popular art. It has more than one audience, of course: Broadway patronizes it, and Europe, and Africa and Asia. But whereas it could get along without these more decorative plaudits, it depends vitally on the American masses. A film that will please only the capitals and languish in the locals, means little to Hollywood's Master Minds. It is the people who count: the workers.

It is, hence, fair to say that the sentiments, attitudes and dreams of the American masses will find, if not flattery and full reflection, at least some harmonious note on the American screen. The makers of our movies are of course high middle-class, with all the ideals and prejudices of wealth. You may accuse them of "putting across" their standards in their work. But you give them a heroism which alas! they lack, if you suggest that they would go to the length of imbuing their wares with unpopular ideas, just because they believed them. Much as they love success and armies, the makers of the movies would refrain, no doubt, from confessing their weakness in public, if such confession weakened their incomes. After all, these men have made money because they have pleased the public. They will keep their money only so long as they hold off from antagonizing their public. If you find in our motion pictures a set of standards, a gamut of values, not only bourgeois, but actually oligarchic, military, anti-proletarian, the reason must be, not alone that these suit the bourgeois fashioner of

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the films, but as well that they do not too radically displease the proletarian patrons.

What the tastes and standards in the movies are, is plain enough. Films devoted to the depiction of labor or rural life are extremely rare. High life is the average film life. Or life in the rising provincial class which begins with a Ford and attains a Packard at forty. Alternate with this is the romantic cowboy world of the West. But such tales are no more proletarian than those of Wall Street. Here also is a realm of the picaresque, sentimental, admittedly mythic, and aspiring to the one True Value: the money and position of the middle class.

Run over in your mind the movies you have seen in a year. How many dealt honestly with the life of a farmer, of a carpenter, of a factory hand? If the hero began as a mechanic, was he not an auto-manufacturer at the end? If he was a stable-boy at the outset, did he not own the stable or marry the girl who owned it, at the fade-out? If Reel One found him a country-bumpkin, was he not a magnate ere you left the theater?

Our movie world, like any theater of its audience, is a confessional of the masses. And what it seems to mirror very plainly indeed is, that the achievement of bourgeois status is the heart's desire of the average toiling man and woman in our country.

This is nothing new. But the obvious conclusion, that this is what the masses really and positively value, is the conclusion we do not wish to make. Worship of big guns, military, financial, social, on which the American movie thrives, is indeed the tonal will of the movie makers. This is what really moves the business men and women who distribute, produce, direct, compose and act our movies. But the true reason why the masses —above all the plastic sons and daughters of the masses—accept such values is that they have not received in any way a set of values of another kind.

The people must love, must worship, must aspire toward something. What school and church provide them, as substance for their dreaming, has gone so dim that it disappears in the brash glamor of the world. The movie gives an idealization of the powers and hungers of daily American life. Empty the people go from church and schoolroom. But the press agent of the silver screen needs only to give a twist to the actual presences of the busy street in order to make the shop-girl a lady and the laborer a millionaire.

The corruptly glamorous values of an exploiting class are absorbed by the people, not because they are corrupt, but because the people lack values and glamor of their own. They have no ethos, they have no myth, they have no simplest story in which the elements of the laboring life take on essential and intrinsic worth. Lincoln, let it not be overlooked, became a corporation lawyer—like any movie hero. And Whitman has not yet been translated into American speech. But when a poet does arise, inspired to sing, as Burns did for his people, the values and virtues of laboring men as men, rather than as aspirants to wealth, the masses will follow him—even in the movies.

It is significant that no one has yet given the movie audience a set of values other than the prevailing. Has anyone tried? We suspect that such a poet would not languish in the ante-rooms of all the movie magnates.

And one reason for our confidence is the unique case of Charlie Chaplin. The average movie-goer does not love Chaplin more than he does Doug Fairbanks or Harold Lloyd or Lon Chaney, because he thinks that Chaplin is a greater artist. The average movie-fan believes that the high art of the screen is in the control of such stars as Swanson or the Gishes. He is likely to be a bit ashamed of his love for Charlie. There are a dozen more "admired" actors. But the average American loves Chaplin most tenderly because Chaplin on the screen is so often a poor cuss of the people who remains one: and who "puts it over," not by becoming a millionaire, but by becoming a human being. Charlie as waiter, bricklayer, fireman, bank-sweeper, pawnbroker's assistant, convict, is not, at the tale's end and in accordance with film-formula, the owner of the restaurant, the contractor, the fire commissioner, the banker, the police lieutenant. He remains, fragilely, wholly, triumphantly, of the people. ("The Gold Rush," in which Charlie strikes gold, is an exception.) He is the frail and unutterably sweet beginning of a movie mythos in which the common man may absorb poetic values not by changing his class, but by becoming himself. And this is the true reason why the common man adores him.

Here is a first step in our American labor and farmer movement which remains to be taken. It consists in the creating of living values within the life of laborer and farmer. Only so will the extrinsic values of "getting ahead" and of "getting into another class" or of abolishing all classes, be displaced. When such living values exist, the radical movements organized to put labor into power will have something to work for and—something to work with.

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Mr. Baldwin Attacks the Trade Unions

I

EVER since the General Strike of last year, it has been known that the Baldwin government contemplated legislation to prevent its repetition. Now the bill has passed its second reading in the House of Commons; and it is already obvious that the issue raised is by far the most important domestic controversy in English politics since Mr. Chamberlain attempted to raise the question of tariff reform. Let me say at once that I believe this bill to be thoroughly dangerous and unsatisfactory. It is not only vicious in principle. As a piece of draftsmanship, it is incredibly vague and careless. It raises problems far wider than any discussed after the General Strike, and its spirit is that of unregenerate reaction. If it passes, in anything resembling its present form, its application would make quite impossible the working of the trade unions.

II

The bill consists of eight clauses and thirty-one sections. These, we have been officially told, have four objects in view. First, they are to prohibit general strikes. Second, they are to prevent the intimidation of men who do not wish to go on strike. Third, they are to prevent trade-unionists who do not belong to the Labor party from being compelled to contribute to the political funds of the unions. Fourth, they are to restrain civil servants from belonging to any association affiliated to a body (i.e., the Trade Union Congress) which is not exclusively composed of other civil servants. There are some minor matters in the bill, but these are its chief essence. How far—for this is the real pith of the problem—does the bill go in attaining them?

The clause which defines an illegal strike is now worded as follows: "Any strike is illegal if it has any object beside the furtherance of a trade dispute within the trade or industry in which the strikers are engaged, and is a strike designed or calculated to coerce the government either directly or by inflicting hardship upon the community; and it is further declared that it is illegal to commence, or continue, or to apply any sums in furtherance or support of any such illegal strike." It is obvious that this section is a miracle of ambiguity and vagueness. It does not define the limits of a trade or industry; it does not define in whose mind design or calculation is to exist; it does not define what is meant by "coercing the government" or "inflicting hardship upon the community." Probably, under its proposals, most sympathetic strikes would be illegal: certainly many primary strikes, e.g., in the railroad and mining industries, since these inflict "hardship upon the community." But what is even worse is the fact that, until a dispute comes into the courts for a test of its legality, no one will know whether it is legal or not. The uncertainty that will surround all action by the trade unions will be a terrible handicap. The withdrawal of their immunity for tort will mean that, in any strike declared illegal, anyone affected by the dispute will be able to sue them; and we shall have a perpetual raiding of trade-union funds by employers bent on their destruction. The malicious intent of this section passes all grounds of decency.

The same argument applies to intimidation. The law has always made picketing in English strikes difficult; and the courts have always interpreted the law with great strictness. The new dispensation so adds to the definition as to make effective picketing impossible. For note the definition that is offered. It means, we are told, "to cause in the mind of a person a reasonable apprehension of injury to him or to any member of his family, or of violence or damage to any person or property, and the expression 'injury' includes injury, other than physical or material injury, and accordingly the expression 'apprehension of injury' includes an apprehension of boycott, or loss of any kind, or of exposure to hatred, ridicule or contempt." It appears, therefore, that it is to be illegal, henceforth, to sneer at a blackleg, to tell him that the failure of the strike will mean a reduction of his wages, to laugh at him in the street, to do, in fact, what it is human nature to do in any situation where men stand on opposite sides. And the judgment of guilt in the alleged offender is settled either by magistrates or judges, whose partisanship in such cases is notorious and flagrant. A trade union, moreover, is forbidden to expel any member who does not take part in an illegal strike; or, alternatively, he can accept expulsion and sue the union for damages of unlimited amount. Let it be noted that when he refuses to strike: (a) he is breaking his contract with the union by which he agrees to strike when called upon and, (b) when he so acts he will not know, since no court will have decided the question, whether the strike is legal or not.

The bill, in the third place, compels trade-unionists to "contract in" instead of "contracting out" of the political fund. American readers may welcome a word of explanation upon this point. Until 1910, trade unions raised funds for political purposes without challenge. In that year, one Osborne, financed by Tories, brought an action against the

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Railwaymen's Union to declare that a political levy was beyond the powers of an industrial society. The House of Lords, then, as always, hostile to trade unions, unanimously held that Osborne was right. The decision outraged public opinion; and in 1913 Mr. Asquith obtained, also unanimously from Parliament, the Trade Union Act of 1913. Thereby any union by a ballot could decide to establish a political fund; but any member who desired not to contribute, could contract out of doing so by giving notice to that effect; and the Registrar of Trade Unions at the Board of Trade was given inspectorial authority over the unions to see that no evasions of the Act took place. Over 100,000 persons contract out yearly; and in the fourteen years since 1913, there have been sixty-six complaints of unfair dealing, half of which proved, on investigation by the Registrar, to be without basis in fact. Since the Act applies to four million trade-unionists paying the levy; since, also, the Tory and Liberal parties distribute annually millions of exemption forms to persuade trade-unionists to contract out, it does not seem beyond the mark to say that the Act is a satisfactory one in operation. Certainly, thirty-three cases out of 4,000,000 in fourteen years does not suggest widespread victimization. The levy, I should add, is one penny per month per member.

What does the bill do with this system? In the future, all trade-unionists must specify annually, in writing, and by post, their desire to contribute to the political fund. The overwhelming mass of trade-unionists, in other words, must do what only a small minority has now to do. Anyone who knows the inertia of the workers, especially where signed documents are in question, will realize the formidable machinery of collection this will entail. Its purpose is quite simple. The levy supports the Labor party. Smash the levy, says the bill, in effect, and the Socialists will not have enough finance to fight the next election. This clause has long been the desire of the Unionists. It was their proposal in 1913. It has been embodied in private bills several times since 1924. It was rejected in 1925 on the personal plea of Mr. Baldwin, who said emphatically that it would not only destroy industrial peace, but that he had no mandate of any kind from the country for such a measure. That a party mainly financed by the sale of honors should stoop to such a mean device in its effort to defeat Labor is evidence both of the advance of Labor and the state of fear out of which Tory legislation is born. By this clause the trade unions are placed under a handicap such as applies to no other voluntary body in the country.

The bill seeks also to separate the civil service trade unions from the Trade Union Congress and the Labor party. It is undesirable, the government says, for a civil servant to have any allegiance other than that which he owes to the state. Without this clause, it argues, the civil servant might strike in response to a call from the Trade Union Congress. Here it must be noted: (1) that the only strike in the history of the civil service was in the Post Office in 1890 before affiliation to the Trade Union Congress; (2) that no civil service trade union has a strike policy or a strike fund; (3) that during the General Strike no civil service union was asked to strike or did strike; (4) that after the strike the members of the unions were officially thanked for their loyalty and efficiency by members of the Cabinet. Let it be added that in recent years Mr. Baldwin, Mr. Churchill and Mr. Neville Chamberlain have all borne public testimony to the quality of civil servants, their loyalty and incorruptibility.

Why, then, this clause, except for the purpose of irritation? It can, I think, be explained on three grounds. First, the major unions, as in the Post Office, are affiliated to the Labor party, and two of their officials are members of Parliament whose election expenses are paid by the unions. The brewers, the railroads, the banks, the oil companies, have their representatives in the House of Commons; but as they are mainly Tory, this does not matter. What the government objects to is when that Soviet principle has Labor results. Secondly, it is desired to drive a wedge between the civil service and the ordinary working-class. There are 300,000 civil servants, of whom two-thirds receive less than four pounds per week. It is natural for them to make increasingly common cause with workers outside with similar rates of pay; the more so as government policy is to base civil service wages on what is paid for similar work elsewhere. This clause will reduce the service trade unions to the level of company unions and give them no weapon of outside support when their standards of wages and hours are attacked. Thirdly, since the government is in process of attacking those standards, to prevent assistance and support from ordinary workers is to strengthen its hand for the fight. And employers generally approve of this, since the civil service standard—poor though it is—is a model towards which others seek to move. To pull down civil service standards is to give a signal for a general lowering of industrial conditions all over the country.

To one other aspect of the bill a reference must be made. Any person directly interested in a dispute can, under its terms, apply to the courts for a declaration of its illegality. The employer or the blackleg is thus given immense opportunities (since there is appeal up to the House of Lords) of depleting trade-union funds by costly litigation; the Taff Vale case alone meant, in costs, nineteen thousand pounds. But, in case this is not enough, under Clause VII, the Attorney General (who is a member of the Cabinet and a passionate Tory politician) is given power, in a supposedly judicial capacity, to apply to the courts for an injunction to restrain any union from applying its funds to what he believes to be an illegal strike. I will not com-

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ment on this further than to say that all liberal-minded Americans know what the use of the injunction means in labor disputes.

III

I have touched here only upon the major issues raised by the bill. Its penalties are heavy; its interpretation is in the hands of juries, judges and magistrates, most of whom are either ignorant of, or hostile to, trade-unionism. Take the latter class alone. There are in England some ten thousand justices of the peace, of whom seven hundred-odd are members of the Labor party; the vast majority, certainly 95 percent, of the rest are Liberal or Tory politicians, usually employers, appointed for active service to their respective parties. The final tribunal in these cases is the House of Lords. All except three of its members are active politicians; of those three, one speaks constantly in support of Tory policy, and another is the brother of the former chairman of the Tory party. Of the juries, I will only say that men like Dicey and Geldart have expressed in strong terms their dissatisfaction with the system as it applies to trade-union cases.

IV

The bill, as may be imagined, has aroused deep passions. The Labor party has already pledged itself to repeal the measure at the first opportunity. Every Liberal of any eminence, except Sir John Simon, has denounced it as one-sided, unwise and inexpedient. Many Tories have publicly regretted its introduction. But, as one distinguished Tory said to me of his party, "the die-hards are now in the saddle, and they will ride the government to the devil." The trade unions are roused as not even the General Strike aroused them. They realize that all their liberties are at stake, and they have organized the largest campaign of modern times against the bill. They publish a special weekly paper devoted to its dissection. They are holding delegate conferences throughout the country, and their political meetings are attended by numbers as great as in a general election.

The government, of course, will pass the bill; its majority in the House of Commons makes that certain. What will happen then? I prophesy that it will seek to avoid applying it until after the next general election, in order to conceal its hostility to trade unions. If events force its hand, the situation may well become serious. If, at that election, Labor obtains a majority, its first act will be to repeal the bill. If the Tories are returned to power, I believe there will be a swing of Labor to the left, which may have immense influence on the whole future of England. If the situation of 1924 is repeated, and no party has a majority, the relations of Labor and Liberalism may well undergo a far-reaching revision. In any case, in the long run, Labor stands to gain immensely by this attack on the one bulwark which every workingman appreciates. The problem is the meantime. For a majority lives by its care not to outrage the feelings of the minority. That is what the government has done. It is no longer possible for any liberal-minded person to regard it as other than a tool of reactionary employers. It has proposed legislation which makes no appeal to, and will have no hold upon, the vast majority of the workers to whom its bitter penal code will apply.

London. HAROLD J. LASKI.

The Isolation of Russia

THE action of the British government in breaking off diplomatic and formal trade relations with the Soviet Union is but an inevitable step in the isolation of Russia, which has been in progress since Germany joined the League of Nations and Mussolini ratified Rumania's annexation of Bessarabia. The *débâcle* of the Soviet policy in China swiftly brought Moscow to Geneva, in the hope of retrieving the losses incurred in the East. But it was a hope doomed to failure. The road from Canton to Geneva lies through London. And the action of Great Britain is not only a means of isolating Russia in the West, but of completing her breakdown in the Orient.

In Moscow, the diplomats speak of an eastern and western front. But the recent events in China and Great Britain have demonstrated that, for the Soviet Union, whose sole reason for existence is industrialization, there is but one battlefront: the financial resources of the West. And in reality, that has been the goal of all the far-flung manifestations of the Soviet foreign policy. Since the rise of the Soviet government, it has been the economic equation of Russia and Great Britain within the orbit of the Old World that constituted the determining factors of Moscow's international position. The present rupture between His Majesty's Government and Moscow was dictated not merely by British internal political considerations, or imperial reasons, but mainly by the economic and political stalemate in which Russia has been caught since the passing of Lenin. An economically powerful Russia could have exercised a lasting dominance over economically backward China. An economically powerful Russia could have retained Germany as a potential ally and kept her away from the League of Nations.

It is no mere accident that Great Britain has severed her relations with Moscow. The spectacular raids on the Soviet Embassy in Peking and the quarters of the Trade Delegation in London were not the cause of the rupture, but merely the means to accomplish it. The discovered documents were but the ammunition required for the explosion. Hence, the question of their authenticity is really immaterial. Hence, the fireworks of The Morning Post and the Moscow Pravda, and of their groups

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of followers throughout the world, are of no significance. Moscow has been talking of a threatened capitalist encirclement of Russia as the "proletarian stronghold," ever since the inauguration of the Dawes Plan. With financial stabilization in Germany and France, with the collapse of the grandiose Soviet concessions and credit schemes in Western Europe and America, there has been a growing realization, at the Kremlin, of impending isolation. Unfortunately, there is no one at the Soviet helm authoritative enough to steer the ship of state into new and useful seas. Paralyzed by the conflict between the Stalin and Trotsky-Zinoviev factions, the crew of the Soviet vessel continues upon its futile international course, repeating in China the failures of Angora, duplicating now in Geneva the futile demonstrations of Genoa.

The road from Canton to Geneva is almost ten years old, speaking in terms of the fourth dimension, which are indispensable to an appreciation of Soviet foreign policy. It is a circuitous road, running from the surrenders of Brest-Litovsk and Riga, the retreats at Afghanistan, Persia, and Turkey, to the conquests in the Caucasus and Mongolia, the "triumph" of Rapallo, and the dubious achievements of numerous international conferences and missions, of *de jure* and *de facto* "recognitions" galore. At first glance, a bewildering road indeed. Yet it can all be reduced to a straight line extending from Moscow to London.

Leninism bequeathed to Bolshevism a set of rigidly simplified principles upon which the foreign policy of Moscow is predicated. "The chasm between communist Russia and the capitalist world is irreconcilable." "The chasm between the working class and the bourgeois class everywhere is irreconcilable." "The chasm between the backward exploited nationalities of Asia and Africa and the exploiting rich nations of Western Europe and America is irreconcilable." "The chasm between the yellow and white imperialists dominating the Pacific is irreconcilable." These are the forces making for the World Revolution, "which alone is capable of bridging the pitfalls that beset the highways of the present international economic system."

Leninism did not provide for a national Russian foreign policy. Lenin did. Herein lies the tragedy of Russia's impotent zigzagging among the states of the world during the last five years. What Leninism failed to supply theoretically during Lenin's lifetime, the sound national instincts of that leader supplied in emergencies. With Lenin dead, with two principal factions struggling for power in Moscow over the interpretation of his dogmatic heritage, the standard-bearers of the Soviet foreign policy find themselves balanced on a rope stretched from Hankow to Geneva, and playing an unenviable triple role. They are the patrons of the world proletariat, for whose sake they court the friendship of Hindenburg's Germany, Pilsudski's Poland, and Mussolini's Italy. They are the sworn champions of the oppressed nationalities, for the sake of which they suffer relations with Churchill's Britain, Poincaré's France, and the Mikado's Japan. They are the preservers of the very life of the Soviet Union, that vanguard of the world revolution, in the interests of which they are endeavoring to gain the confidence of the London City and of Wall Street, and are even eager to join in the emerging international industrial "cartels" which are plainly designed, as one of the Soviet representatives in Geneva put it, "to tighten the dictatorship of capitalism" in Europe.

When the Geneva Economic Conference adopted, a few days ago, the much discussed resolution recognizing the co-existence of capitalistic and communistic states in the world, it was Moscow in the garb of the patron of the international proletariat that registered a victory. At last the social revolution has been advanced! Have not the representatives of all the bourgeois states of the globe acknowledged openly, although somewhat vaguely, the existence of a distinct economic system under the Soviet flag? The revolutionary battle-line is clearly drawn between capitalism and communism. Will the battle be long delayed now?

And when the British, by virtue of their "nefarious capitalistic influence in China," were able to bring about the detachment of General Chiang Kai-shek from the Cantonese *risorgimento* (of which Russia was but a sympathetic observer), Moscow registered, through its international manifestos, a severe setback to the cause of the World Revolution, as represented by the Soviet Union.

The inference is obvious. The World Revolution is synonymous with the Soviet Union. But the Soviet Union has nothing to do with Russia. Spell not RUSS, but U. S. S. R. True enough, Russia is a member of the Soviet Union. But so is Bokhara. The propelling power of the Soviet foreign policy does not emanate from the soil of the country, it is not dictated by economic, national interests, it flows from the holy scrolls of Marxism. It is founded on the ideological incompatibility of the Soviet Union and the capitalistic states of the world.

But why is the Soviet ship of state, after ten years of sailing, not even within sight of its goal? In fact, what is that insidious current that unfailingly carries it not only further away from its mapped course, but back to its starting-point? Why the fiasco in China? Why the fiasco in London? Why did Persia and Turkey, after receiving aid and comfort from Moscow, turn against it? Why did Lithuania go Fascist as soon as it concluded a virtual alliance with Russia? Why did Pilsudski arise in Poland upon the first definite signs of a Russian orientation on the part of the Polish Conservatives? Why did the Treaty of Rapallo bring Germany into the League of Nations? Why did "Red" Italy turn "Black"? And why, oh, why, the disintegration of the Communist International and the hopeless waning of the World Revolution?

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Because, from the very beginning of the Soviet Revolution, the national interests of Russia have deflected the course of the Soviet foreign policy. Because a foreign policy may be imperialistic, narrow, faltering, but it should never be empirical. A foreign policy should be based on realities, even though they may be class or group realities. And Lenin himself proved it—and proved it against Leninism. When, early in 1918, the bewildered Bolshevik chieftains, armed with a Leninist formula, rose against Lenin and opposed the Brest-Litovsk Treaty on the ground that a pact with the Kaiser would be a fatal blow to the then fermenting revolution in Germany, Lenin threw overboard his Leninism, and declared that the peasant voted for peace.

"If you please," inquired Karl Radek, "how do you mean he voted?"

"He voted with his legs: he's running away from the front," was Lenin's unanswerable answer.

And ever since Brest-Litovsk the peasant has been voting in Russia. He has been voting with every conceivable device, except the secret ballot abolished by the Bolshevist dictatorship, but he has been voting most effectively none the less. "As the only producer of capital in the country," says the peasant, "I will not yield any surplus value to the state unless I receive full value for my labor."

Stop and contemplate: 52 percent of the banking capital of Russia before the War was foreign. It was annihilated by the Revolution, the blockade, and intervention. Fifty percent of all the available machinery in Russia today is over twenty-five years old, and nearly all of the rest has gone through the tear and wear of seven years of warfare and revolution. After ten years of the existence of the Soviet government, after six years of peace, it is able to supply to the peasant annually manufactured goods valued at $8.25, as compared with a similar consumption of $17.11 in 1913, and this without taking into consideration the depreciation of the present currency. Russia has a population of 145,000,000, of whom but 2,000,000 are industrial workers. Less than 1,000,000 more are transport workers. (The remaining 3,000,000 members of the All-Russian Trade Unions are Soviet bureaucrats.*) Economically, the Soviet Union, which today does not include the industrial Poland and Baltic countries, is but another China.

It is a truism to say that Russia needs capital. London holds the keys to the treasuries of the world. The paths to the financial resources of the United States, France, even Germany and Belgium, lie through London. But London is the stronghold of world capitalism and Moscow is the stronghold of world communism. The Moscow tactics have, therefore, been in the interests of the World Revolution, very simple: bribe the British merchants; in fact, bribe the merchants of the capitalist world. Give them trade, and they will let you do anything. For this reason, Moscow preferred Baldwin to MacDonald. For this reason, Moscow preferred Hindenburg to Scheidemann, Poincaré to Herriot and Bloom. But bribes, to be effective, must be commensurate to the situation. And Moscow could offer no bribes of consequence. Moscow is poor, very poor. For the peasant would yield no capital. For the creative energies of the Russian people, set free by the Revolution, have been chained by a set of dogmas foreign to their philosophy, inimical to their vital interests.

Five years ago, Lenin laid down the formula that Soviet recognition of Tsarist debts must be conditional upon the granting of large credits to Moscow. That was five years ago, at Genoa. Since then, many of Lenin's illusions have gone. Gone is Lenin himself. But his commandment still stands. Never had a tactical formula of Lenin's survived for such a long period during his lifetime. The realities of the international economic and political situation have long since demonstrated its absurdity. But Moscow still clings to this antiquated policy.

Unable to secure capital by the exercise of that formula, Moscow adopted, in addition, the old imperial Russian tactics of injuring Great Britain in Asia, under the disguise of the red flag of the Communist International. Russia's policies in China were but demonstrations, diversions, in her game in London, for the World Revolution was never intended to commence in the East. Had the Soviet Union received credits from Great Britain, there would not have been any smoke-screens in China or Turkey. The Kremlin is aware, and has been from the very beginning, of the insignificance of China in the proletarian revolutionary movement of the world. There was therefore no genuine ideological issue at stake between Great Britain and Russia. The stakes were purely economic. But Russia today is no longer the international factor that she was before the Revolution. Assuming the role played by imperial Germany in Morocco and Turkey, the Soviet Union found itself helpless in face of the disappearance of the old balance of power in Western Europe. Poland has to a considerable degree supplanted Russia in the East for France. Besides, Germany's vital interests, for the time being, at least, can be satisfied only by the West. Italy has supplanted Russia as well as Austria-Hungary in the Balkans. Russia's national interests, because of her economic condition, are indeed akin to those of the Orient, but the Orient, for the present, and in all likelihood for generations to come, will need western capital. It is an unenviable position to be poor in a rich world, but unfortunately that is the position of Soviet Russia, and it dictates an attitude and a policy that go, under the hard capitalistic system, with defunct debtors requiring further credits for rehabilitation.

ISAAC DON LEVINE.

* The statistics here quoted are from documents prepared by the Trotsky-Zinoviev-Kamenev Opposition during the recent struggle within the Central Committee of the Communist party.

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Seven Years of Prohibition

THE great experiment upon which the Coolidge administration embarked when it brought Brigadier General Lincoln C. Andrews to Washington to introduce a militant and crusading spirit into the enforcement of national prohibition has ended. With the passing of both Andrews and his bitter rival in the prohibition bureau, Commissioner Roy A. Haynes, a marked change in the manner and purpose of prohibition enforcement will be felt, even by those who cannot distinguish a pocket flask from a worm still. Prohibition itself, aside from the question of enforcement, appears to have entered into a new stage.

The personalities of the men now chosen to bear the burden of enforcement reflect the transformation. Seymour W. Lowman, a former Lieutenant Governor of New York State, possesses nothing of the fire and dash and vigor of Andrews, whom he will succeed on August 1. Whereas Andrews was a crisp, dogmatic, military figure, Lowman is an easy-going, slow-spoken country contractor from the small town of Elmira. Dr. James M. Doran, the successor of the apostolic Mr. Haynes, will not be inspired by the latter's holy zeal. Twenty years ago, Doran entered the Internal Revenue Service, and his climb to his present eminence has been by slow degrees. Such a life is not calculated to develop the evangelistic fervor of a Volstead-day saint. Haynes was pudgy, vociferous and fanatic; Doran is of slight frame, unassuming and sane.

Under Lowman, there will be no under-cover squads, government blind tigers or spectacular raids along Broadway, as there were under Andrews. Doran will not rely for enforcement upon church sermons, Chautauqua addresses, or placards exhorting the populace to obey the dry laws, as did Haynes. The fire-and-brimstone method of enforcement, it appears, has spent itself.

The significance of the change goes beyond the mere problem of enforcement; it reflects a new attitude toward the principle of prohibition on the part of the administration and the American public. Andrews' experiment failed long ago, but the administration continued to go through the motions of carrying it on. But the selection of such colorless and uninspiring men as Lowman and Doran indicates clearly that the President and his advisors are determined to relegate this problem to the background, and keep it there. It is obvious that such a canny politician as Calvin Coolidge would not have reached this decision if he did not believe that a changing public opinion would commend the move.

This is not to say that there is any prospect of repeal or modification of the dry laws by the next Congress, or by its successors within the next decade. The great majority of our law-makers will continue to vote dry and drink wet. But it does seem to indicate that the people are recovering their sanity on this subject. The Anti-Saloon League, for instance, no longer exercises its ancient influence; its annual collections, which amounted to $840,000 in 1920, and more in previous years, had dropped to a little more than $300,000 in 1925. Enemies of militant prohibition have directed their latest attacks upon the League's sources of financial supply. A campaign has been undertaken, with fair success, to convince large employers of labor that, even from the selfish standpoint of capital, prohibition is a failure. Judge E. H. Gary of the United States Steel Corporation still approves of prohibition for the working man, but some of the presidents of his subsidiaries are members of, and contributors to, the Association against the Prohibition Amendment. Capital, apparently, is beginning to believe that the mounting cost of crime, the general state of unrest, and the poison injected into the body politic and economic by the general disregard for law that has resulted from prohibition, more than outweigh its superficial benefits and advantages. In Congress and out, the wets are beginning to show more intelligent strategy in their criticism of conditions growing out of prohibition.

It was not until Harding took office in 1921 that the prohibitionists awoke from the innocent slumber into which they had dropped when the amendment became law, and demanded that they be permitted to dominate the prohibition department. The Republican administration agreed and appointed Haynes as prohibition commissioner.

Haynes was the child of the Anti-Saloon League. He was reared in the home and atmosphere of Ohio zealots, and there was more honest belief in the efficacy of prohibition behind his stupid and silly methods of enforcement than most people realize. For all his enemies' vituperation, the little man was sincere, but wholly lacking in force or ability. Instead of demanding additional personnel and appropriations from Congress, he thought that revision of the regulations, without statutory authorization, would accomplish his purpose. During the recent Haynes-Andrews controversy, it was argued on Haynes' behalf that the record showed more arrests during his administration than during that of any other enforcement chief. But they were arrests of hip-toters and similar indiscreet bibbers who revealed themselves by carriage and speech. Prohibition agents under Haynes achieved a record for such arrests and minor confiscations, but he made almost no attempt to check smuggling and the leakage of high-powered beer and industrial alcohol.

Spending more hours on the lecture platform than in Washington, Haynes seemed to prefer sanctification of the dry laws to their enforcement. But

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he stubbornly refused to compromise with common sense, and therefore he was eminently satisfactory to the cohorts of Wayne B. Wheeler, the Anti-Saloon League generalissimo, though, under Haynes, organized bootlegging was born, grew to huge proportions and flourished notoriously.

When the situation became intolerable, in the spring of 1925, the administration commandeered Andrews for the task. Amid loud cheers, he arrived in Washington and took office, determined, if possible, to "take prohibition out of politics," and if he found this impossible, to resign. Andrews soon suffered disillusionment. He found that an official's life in Washington is a tit-for-tat proposition—that unless he gave heed to the politicians' suggestions, he need not look for a favorable response to his requests for congressional appropriations. His attempt to break the Anti-Saloon League's grip on enforcement machinery, by ousting Haynes, was blocked; the administration could hardly afford to antagonize the embattled and organized drys by displacing their favorite office-seeker. So Haynes was retained, though shorn of everything but his salary.

Meanwhile, Andrews applied himself with intelligence and energy to certain basic problems which all his predecessors had overlooked. He obtained power to revise regulations, and the permit system, so as to furnish his men with a closer check on hitherto neglected reservoirs of beer, alcohol, whiskey and wine. He organized special squads to attack the large sources of supply; some of the largest bootlegging rings in the country were smashed, and ringleaders of the George Remus type were sent to prison. He asked for, and received, appropriations commensurate with his ambitious program, totaling more than $30,000,000 in one year, whereas his predecessors had had neither program nor appropriations. He scattered Rum Row with a dry navy as powerful as the naval forces which represented Great Britain and Spain at the destruction of the Great Armada. He negotiated smuggling agreements with Great Britain, Canada, Mexico and Cuba, which have reduced large-scale smugglers to the use of only two ports for far-flung operations—Tahiti in the South Seas and the island of St. Pierre off the Newfoundland coast. Both are French territory, and *la belle France* smilingly declined to join the United States in the Coolidge crusade.

Though Andrews himself will not contend that he has made prohibition a reality, he went about it in a businesslike manner; prohibition enforcement became at least 50 percent more effective than it had ever been before. Liquor was to be obtained, and still is, and perhaps always will be, but the great bulk, during the last year, has been "bad stuff." This is evidenced by figures showing the tremendous increase in the number of deaths from alcoholism during 1925 and 1926.

The largest part of this reorganization was the result of Andrews' own energy and personality. His was a single-handed fight. He did not receive the support, in or out of Congress, which he had been led to expect would be given by the administration. At all times the Anti-Saloon League sulked in its tent, and frequently it exhibited open hostility. Andrews was too brusque and businesslike in his manner for it. He did not pause often enough in his work to proclaim from the housetops the holiness of the dry laws. For a while, he had the coöperation of some of the large business interests of the country, including Judge Gary, but their enthusiasm soon lagged, and they defaulted on their pledges to supply him with capable executives.

About a year ago came a burst of frankness from Andrews which convinced the Wheelerites that the dry chief had never been washed clean of his original sin of "liberalism." Testifying before a Senate committee, he admitted that the manufacture and sale of real beer would aid enforcement. From that moment the leaguers made no attempt to conceal their enmity toward the heretic. Then began Wheeler's long and sustained fight to take prohibition enforcement out of the hands of "the wets," and place it in the custody of none but true believers and "sympathizers with The Law."

The campaign to supersede Andrews with Haynes was on. It received impetus from Secretary Mellon's appointment of Haynes as "Acting Prohibition Commissioner" under the reorganization program adopted by the last Congress. No sooner was he again in high place than Haynes started to sabotage Andrews. He avowed that the reorganization bill placed supreme control over enforcement in the Commissioner rather than in Andrews, and that he meant to be the boss. It was the voice of Haynes, but the Anti-Saloon League's ultimatum.

Dissension immediately spread through the prohibition establishment. There was an Andrews faction, consisting of his supporters and appointees, and there was a Haynes faction, consisting of holdovers from the period when the League dominated the department. The members of the two groups were hardly civil to one another even in the transaction of routine business. Secretary Mellon was forced by these circumstances to intervene, but he declined to continue Haynes in power, despite Wheeler's almost daily visits to the White House. Mr. Coolidge, with his usual astuteness, left the matter entirely in Mellon's hands. The Secretary of the Treasury, without actually forcing out Andrews, let it be known that the only permanent remedy was the elimination of both protagonists.

After weeks of consideration of problems in higher politics, Andrews was allowed to resign, with honor but naught else, and Haynes was fired. But it was not such a crushing defeat for the league as many suppose. Though it did not succeed in putting over Haynes, the organization contributed to the resignation of Andrews, which was the primary

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objective. And let nobody suppose that Mr. Wheeler has been permanently exiled.

Politically speaking, the administration has emerged from a distressing dilemma remarkably well. The Anti-Saloon League, if it felt so inclined, might be able to arouse formidable opposition to Mr. Coolidge's third-term aspirations. But the Wheeler group can hardly generate much enthusiasm among its allies for retaliatory tactics based upon Haynes' reverse. Lowman, who will have actual supervision of enforcement, is the recognized leader of the dry wing of the Republican party in New York State. For years he has been an ally of the Anti-Saloon League. Dr. Doran's experience and ability in the technical work of enforcement is conceded by the drys. Though he is a prohibitionist, he does not work at it outside of his job. But he is the son of a retired Methodist minister, which ought to help his standing in the Bible Belt.

Times change. The vocal and vigorous programs pursued respectively by Haynes and Andrews will be supplanted by the unspectacular methods of Lowman and Doran. Political values change, too. With a national election only a year away, the administration apparently feels that the more unobtrusive enforcement can be made, the better. In striving for Haynes' appointment, the Anti-Saloon League was seeking to have the official stamp of sanctity placed upon the Eighteenth Amendment and the Volstead Act. But Mr. Coolidge and Mr. Mellon, for the present at least, appear to regard them as merely part of the general body of law, and not as divine tablets handed down from Mt. Sinai.

RAY T. TUCKER.

Grand Street Valedictory

Grand Street Follies, The Neighborhood Playhouse, May 19, 1927.

THE career of the Neighborhood Playhouse comes to an end now for good and all, as it has ended the past few seasons, with the Grand Street Follies; and has for its final venture rediscovered that hilarious success of three summers ago.

Compared to that number of their Follies, this new creation lacks the rich volume and point that made so luminous a comment on the town's art. But that, in a way, applies more to the theater itself than to this travesty at the Neighborhood. Three years ago there was more to travesty, more to think about, more to bite your teeth into, more to smile at and exalt. There were settings, importations, technical experiments and arguments, and insistent personalities that could be worked into the gay, sane judgments of burlesque. It is not without point to observe that in this season there is, so far as the theater is concerned, only one outstanding theme for satire. If Christianity did a great thing for love when it made it a sin, the law has done a great thing for Grand Street by making stage indecorum a crime. The satirization of this indecency and license of the stage supplies the thread on which this year's Follies are strung. A little child goes through with her professor asking light and education, finding it hard to be innocent as the world opens up to her contemplation.

The best of these stage skits is the one that shows a chorus of theatrical convicts, all in stripes, all mopping, cleaning and singing of their problem, with a sort of encore in which Miss Paula Trueman's Helen Menken explains her case, and with an appended envoi of Mae West and a Virgin Man. Mr. Albert Carroll gets the applause constant to his impersonations with new offerings of Mrs. Fiske and Ethel Barrymore and his old Barrymore Hamlet. There is a skit on "The Silver Cord" that is full not only of good burlesquing but of a real pertinency as well; what it says about the craze for Freudian inferences is the sublest satire of the evening.

That other function that burlesque may assume in our theater and that is a more valuable contribution and more needed than any airing of the theater itself, appears most successfully in the Coolidge number, in which the President and a white-haired old man sit knitting on the smallest front porch to the simplest farmhouse in New England, and a chorus of reporters try, with the help of Sullivan's music, but vainly, to arouse signs of thought. This is a needed function in burlesque on the times, on political questions, on ramping newspaper topics, on what, in sum, goes to describe, evolve and flurry our American life. In their uptown migration to the Little Theater this week, the Grand Street Follies could do nothing more serviceable and effective than to keep this side of their burlesque alive and going. The last part of their program will doubtless disappear for uptown purposes, since its function was purely local to the playhouse and largely emotional in value. The murder number was good to keep, if its speed were, after the first two minutes, doubled or even trebled. The Ford-Shapiro minstrel needs reworking badly, if not cutting out entirely. And, all through the evening, the impersonations, like that of Miss Dorothy Sand's Jane Cowl, Miss Blank Blank's Mae West, and most of the others, would gain by something more of exact imitation, more of the telling wit that glints of exact reproduction can give, flashes of the precise voice, movement and mental rhythm of the player that is hit off for us.

Regret that such an enterprise as the Neighborhood Playhouse should conclude its career has been felt by all who believe in the theater as an art worth while; this regret and the reasons for such a decision to stop have been too widely written of already to need any discussion here. That the organization has long since outgrown its neighborhood, its first methods and its home, is evident. But the fundamental reasons for closing must be found, doubtless, in the fact that so many similar organizations have arisen in New York and other places that the exact function and purpose of the Neighborhood has been more and more difficult to determine. The advantages that it originally offered to artists in every field have been, to some extent at least, duplicated in many other places; the spirit that it held in its policy and management has spread, in part at least, to many other organizations—whatever the degree of its practice, we may certainly say that the understanding of such a spirit is much more widely spread.

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I doubt if anything the Neighborhood Playhouse has ever done is more valuable than their closing just at this time. It is valuable because it is the clearest and most arresting way possible of saying to all theaters in America based on like intentions and interests, all of what, for lack of a better word, we must call art theaters, all theaters looking toward the principles and the future of the art, that the time has come now when they must face their precise problem. They must look at the regular commercial theater; they must see how much of their own matter has passed into that larger field, they must consider the enlarged opportunities that have arrived for the new, the revolutionary, the special in the arts of the theater; these and a dozen other aspects of their problem they need to go over, inch by inch, or else become as commonplace and trite as the very thing from which they departed.

The playhouse on Grand Street has had its shortcomings and its virtues, all of which have been pointed out time and again. As a valedictory observation, the thing that I should like to point out most of all is this: to people interested in the arts or working in the arts, visual, literary or musical, that can be brought into the theater, the groups at the Neighborhood have unfailingly supplied one advantage, the rarity and blessing of which any artist, and almost any intelligent person, will recognize at once: they speak the same language. Their language has been that familiar to the civilized, creative and cosmopolitan modern world.

This was never better expressed than by Miss Lewisohn's reply to one of the critics. When the Misses Lewisohn, after some urging, let it be known, for the sake of clarifying the general subject, that they have put into their enterprise something over half a million dollars more than the amount of money received, one of the critics expressed a wonder as to how these artistic theater enthusiasts must feel about such returns as this account signified.

Miss Lewisohn spoke another language when she replied that she had mentioned this sum as an indication not of the cost of the experiment but of its value.

STARK YOUNG.

Dante and Modern Criticism*

TODAY we live in a sort of *furore* about Dante, in a kind of Dante-whirl so strangely at variance with the apparent preoccupations and temper of our own age that it must bear some organic relation to them or it could not exist. The researches of the archivists have put mountainous historic materials at the disposal of literary men, who supply an avid public with books about the poet. The amateur finds a popular Dante-library on every corner, walks in, and helps himself.

It may be that in Dante people today find the human heat that has evaporated—temporarily, as we hope—from religion, philosophy, and the fine arts during the recent scientific era. For the Age of Reason in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was followed by an Age of Science in the nineteenth and twentieth, when the whole world became all agog to find out everything. As the enthusiasm for science increased, the spirit of research chilled the genial currents of the soul, and Dante became a refuge. He was an indestructible reservoir of Mediterranean heat.

It may also be that we are drawn toward Dante because the study of him opens up the heart of all the cultivation of Western Europe during the three great periods of its existence, namely the Classic, the Medieval, and the Modern. A knowledge of Dante leads us into a study of the Classics. Dante is in himself the Middle Ages—or by far the largest and most living fragment of them; and we ourselves are the Moderns, and, of course, we bring ourselves to the classroom. Thus it is that the study of Dante brings all three epochs to a single focus.

Every age summarizes the past in terms of its own dominant philosophic notions. We know how thoroughly Dante did this in dealing with preceding ages. It was inevitable that the nineteenth century should subject Dante, as it subjected everything, to its own peculiar critical instruments. They were scientific dogmas, even as Dante's own dogmas had been theological dogmas. One of these scientific dogmas, which closely resembles some of Dante's dogmas, is that you can find out anything whatever through hard intellectual work. The thinker presupposes his own competency as an investigator. This dogma had proved so successful in our analysis of the material universe that it was naturally extended to problems of psychology, morality, religion, and art.

The archeological, quasi-scientific, and documentary study of the fine arts during the last fifty years in Europe has pretty nearly come to the dust at the bottom of the basket: it has found out everything except the wind in the bellows. And yet there has been less normal artistic life during this period than there was during the period when men were dancing minuets. The explanation would seem to be that the truth about religion and the fine arts can only be expressed in terms of religion and fine arts. These subjects have, of late, been studied by men who had no practical acquaintance with the vehicles which they dealt with. This is an interesting outcome of the search for truth; and there is only one thing that can be safely predicted in regard to it, namely, that it will not continue forever. The impulse beneath this movement was, as everyone knows, first seen in the Revival of Learning; but the special epoch which I have in mind had a rather definite beginning, and will probably come to a rather definite close. The spirit of this epoch was ridiculed in Goethe's "Faust" in the character of Wagner, *"Schön weiss ich viel, doch möcht ich alles wissen,"* says the complacent aspirant for wisdom.

The pedant is as old as history, but no age has ever taken him so seriously as we do. Ever since Winckelmann began the examination of Greek statuary with the notion of translating Hellenic art into the German language, learned critics who have never had a chisel in their hands have been writing up art, each in the cant psychology of his own decade, and all believing that they had laid hands on the subject. Men who had no religion, no sympathy with dogma, and no experience with the government of men, have been writing tomes about the Middle Ages. Egyptologists and anthropologists are today endeavoring to get an insight into the most subtle mysteries of the antique or prehistoric consciousness, mysteries which, if they should really be understood, could only be recorded in the vehicles of

*Reprinted from Dante, by John Jay Chapman (Houghton, Mifflin Company).

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the imagination, as, for instance, by poetry, by ritual or gesture, yet which the learned dash down in the lingo of their classroom, to be read by the spectacled world and regarded as very profound. The talk is all of Music and the Muses; but where are the Instruments? If some one of these investigators should really hear a strain that once issued from Saint Cecilia's pipes or a tune sung by Orpheus, what organ would he play it on? He would reproduce it with perfect self-assurance on his typewriter. The arrogance with which we sit down to sum up the past, and advise our young Ph.D.'s—who have never written a couplet—to write essays about the influence of Shenstone on Wordsworth, is perhaps a sign that the epoch is drawing to a close. The absurdity of it is revealed in its dissolution.

I say that the great illusion of the period which is now passing has been that anything whatever, no matter how recondite, could be discovered through hard intellectual work and mental concentration. Would it not then be natural if, when once honestly baffled in our search for truth through concentration, we should be unexpectedly invaded by truth in the relaxation that followed on our acknowledgment of failure? Surely the world will give a great sigh of relief when it discovers that a tremendous intellectual power has been misapplied. We have been endeavoring to express the fluid universe of man's emotions in terms and symbols drawn from the study of physical science; and in the meantime we have all but forgotten the languages of Art, Poetry, and Religion which alone can express the passion for truth with which we burn.

JOHN JAY CHAPMAN.

Feuernacht

The leaf-veined fire
Warned to trouble the least
The shuttered eye
Turned from its feast—
Running the night
In long fanned gush
Must burn in that sight
Less than a rush.

The torch being laid
And the land kindled
And the deepest shade
Caught fire-brindled,
The thicket and the bare
Rock, rising bright,
The eye in its lair
Quivers for sight.

To touch at the sedge
And then run tame
Is a broken pledge.
The leaf-edged flame
Shears the bark piled for winter,
The grass in the stall.
Sworn to lick at a little
It has burned all.

LOUISE BOGAN.

A New York Diary

"MR. BENCHLEY"

WHEN Robert Benchley was still at Harvard, the Harvard Lampoon was probably the most amusing humorous magazine in America. Puck and Judge were at their lowest ebb as barber-shop weeklies; and Vanity Fair did not yet exist. As for Life, which had started out in the eighties under the auspices of former Lampoon editors and which was then a sort of American shadow of Punch, it had become almost completely stereotyped and was losing all its distinction. What Mr. Benchley and Mr. Sherwood did for Life was to feed it from the magic fount of the Harvard Lampoon again. They brought to it a new carelessness, a new sophistication and a new taste—it was the accent of the undergraduate and it gave American humor a new quality. For there is a gentlemanly negligence about Benchley, a distaste for loud-mouthed gagging, combined with a certain audacity of irreverence toward the most respectable institutions, which are as alien to Irvin Cobb as they were to Bill Nye. Mr. Benchley is never brutal or even tactless, but he has the clever undergraduate's gift (since for the undergraduate most things are not serious) of making anything sound nonsensical. And his superiority over his disciples and imitators, who have learned his technique of what the psychologists call free thought association, lies in his ability still to retain the tone of the amateur even now that he has become a professional. (Donald Stewart, for example, who has more satire than Benchley, and Frank Sullivan, who has perhaps more imagination, both weary us, when not at their best, by pursuing carelessness too relentlessly and too systematically.) He has lately been writing descriptions of valuable tapestries and "Late Eighteenth—Early Nineteenth Century English political cartoons" recently acquired by collectors: "The picture represents the embarrassing predicament which the Duke of Wellington found himself in shortly after the passage of the Corn Law of 1810. Wellington is shown here trying to prevent the Chancellor of the Exchequer (then a man known as Marbrake, or 'Catchy' Marbrake) from throwing out the estates of the Queen Regent of Holland, shown here as 'riding on the back of Marbrake,' a slang term of the period meaning to cut down expenses. Marbrake is shown saying, 'Buck, buck, how many horns do I hold up?' which refers to his having been accused in the General Assizes of conspiring with Holland to keep the British fleet engaged at maneuvers while Spain (then in league with the Prince of Wales against the Duke of York) should seize Cornwall. In the bed is King George (III-IV), who is saying 'No more fun for me, d——!', evidently a joking reference to his intrigues with Potsdam." Some years ago Mr. Benchley wrote a burlesque of the New Republic, which, we fear, is still fresh: "The overthrow of the Manchu dynasty ten years ago marked the beginning of what is known as the Last Decade. During this period there has been a noticeable increase in class-consciousness and fun of all kinds, a sign which is interpreted by Win Yong Lo, the most forward-looking liberal in China (or at least in the Lang Ho region) to mean that within the coming ten years the world will see a recrudescence of Chi-

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nese radicalism which will equal anything you ever saw in your life."

The Sophistication of Judge

One of the features of the Harvard Lampoon had been special numbers burlesquing the newspapers and the magazines; and, despite the protests and apprehensions of the older generation of humorists, who believed such satire too subtle for the public, Mr. Benchley and Mr. Sherwood persuaded the editors of Life to try an experiment of this sort. The "Burlesque Number" proved so popular that it has often been repeated, and this invention seems now to have become one of the stand-bys of humorous editing. The undergraduates of the Harvard Lampoon used to illustrate their "success stories" with old photographs of idiotic-looking men with straggling mustaches, Ascot ties and hair parted in the middle, and their columns of society news with ladies in tight-buttoned waists and wide sleeves riding primitive bicycles; and this device, so amusing at first, has been carried along with the burlesque number until it has finally become tiresome. The recent "Tabloid Number" of Judge failed, it seems to the writer of these notes, precisely by reason of its pointless and resourceless dependence upon this trick; but the fact itself that the device should have become a cliché shows how far-reaching the influence of undergraduate humor has been. And an examination of the other features of Judge, in its present incarnation, furnishes further evidence of the turn which American popular humor has taken. The new Judge's happiest discovery, for example, has perhaps so far been its man-of-all-work, Perelman, who practises a special personal branch of the fashionable "cuckoo" school of humor. Mr. Perelman's jokes are invariably illustrated with imitation wood-cuts which have nothing to do with the text. Thus, under the heading, "Look Boys, the Mounted Always Get Their Man!" we read the following: "A shoe-clerk named Butts or Gregory or something told us this panic the other night in a gin-mill. It appears that an old lady went into a butcher shop and said, 'Hey, Finkle, I want a nice piece of meat—without any fat or gristle or bone in it!' 'Say, Rosie,' replied the jolly butcher, 'if that's what you want, I think you better buy an egg!' Crimson with shame, the old lady cut a sorry figure." Or under, "Something He Et No Doubt, Said the Copper Sagely" (a picture of an incapacitated man being dragged up to a policeman): "Nobody knows what a red-headed mamma can do, says the bard, and this little fable seems to bear the saying out. A small tad approached an old dame and inquired, 'Say, Peaches, can you crack nuts with your teeth?' 'Why, no!' replied granny, hunting around for her specs. 'Fine!' abjured young Abner. 'Hold these walnuts while I go shake down some more from that tree!' Was ever impatient youth more impudent to mellow age?"

Sociological Observations

In the comic use of old-fashioned photographs, in Perelman's pictures and jokes, in the familiar household banalities—the old friends of every American home—into which Benchley is always slipping in his efforts to describe his trying experiences amidst the bewilderments and rigors of the city, and in innumerable other features of current American humor, we recognize the sudden growth of New York from a provincial city to a metropolis and the sudden sophistication of the Americans in becoming conscious of the naïvetés of their immediate past. And, in proportion as we have learned to make fun of the croquet tournament and the church sociable, we have cultivated a new urbanity and luxury. The vein of easy and casual pleasantry, with its suggestion of the man about town or the woman of the world, which, ten or fifteen years ago, Mr. P. G. Wodehouse evolved by combining the slang of both sides of the Atlantic and which Mr. Crowninshield taught his caption-writers on Vanity Fair has been carried out into all the other magazines of humor and fashion and has ended by becoming one of the chief instruments of what is known as "class advertising." Even the advertisers, like the clever undergraduates, now have their "line." The "line" has become a sort of American speciality; so far as one knows, no other country in the world has, or has ever had, this sort of humor. As to whether it is a national asset or a curse, it is a little difficult to decide. It is probably a symptom of immaturity; but it is also a sign of high spirits and health.

CORRESPONDENCE

"The Responsibility of Nations"

SIR: I have read with interest Professor William L. Langer's able review of my "Five Weeks. The Surge of Public Opinion on the Eve of the Great War," in the New Republic for May 11. I have great respect for Professor Langer's scholarship, and shall certainly take into account his findings and comments in any future edition of my book that may be issued.

It seems to me, however, that some of the opinions expressed by Professor Langer may need some modification. Among other things, he says, in relation to the crisis of July, 1914:

> Mr. Scott is probably wrong in assuming the innocence of the Russian statesmen, and he is almost certainly wrong in assuming the danger of revolution in case of Russian compliance. The Neo-Slavs and Cadets did not make the revolution even in 1917, under greater pressure. The real danger of revolution came from internationally inclined proletarians.

In point of fact, I intended to suggest, rather than to assume, in my book, the danger of revolution in Russia, in case the government had yielded on the Serbian issue. Aside from this point, however, I would place over against Professor Langer's opinion certain statements made by Mr. Alexander Kerensky. In the course of an interview which I had with him in Paris in January, 1926, and which I have quoted in my book, he asserted emphatically that,

> had the Russian government yielded in 1914 and refused to intervene on the side of Serbia, public opinion in all circles would have been so irritated at the feebleness of this conduct, that the result might easily have been the government's overthrow.

Again, in an article recently published in the New York Times (May 8, 1927), Mr. Kerensky says that

> the months immediately preceding the World War found Russia seething with revolutionary sentiment. Had it not been for the War, I am firmly convinced that a revolution would have begun in the fall of 1914.

He tells how he and his co-workers were preparing

> for the expected joint offensive of all bourgeois, proletarian and peasant parties and organizations against Tsarism and for the establishment of a democratic, parliamentary regime.

Suddenly came the news of Austria's ultimatum to Serbia and

> in a moment our mood underwent a sharp change. In the

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> cries of the newsboys we sensed at once the first breath of the historic hurricane. The entire situation in Europe left no doubt that war was inevitable.

I confess that, when I take into account Kerensky's statements, together with the angry blasts of the Russian newspapers after Austria had sent her note to Serbia, and certain evidence drawn from diplomatic documents, memoirs, and statements of foreign observers in Russia during the crisis, I can no longer believe, as I once believed, in the "guilt" of Sazonov and the other Russian leaders. As far as I can see, it was simply taken for granted in Russia that, once Austria had declared war on Serbia, a great conflict was practically unavoidable. I have, therefore, concluded that

> it would seem that if the Russian general mobilization entailed war with Germany, Austria's declaration of war on Serbia had previously entailed the Russian mobilization. ["Five Weeks," p. 264.]

In any case, it is to be hoped that all serious students of the immediate origins of the War will give more attention than they have yet done to the influence of public opinion in relation to the crisis, going through the newspapers and examining with care such statements on the subject as are to be found in the diplomatic documents and in memoirs. Whatever their findings may prove to be, it is hard to see how the *Kriegsschuldfrage* can be thoroughly understood save in this setting.

Yonkers, New York. JONATHAN F. SCOTT.

A Story of Philosophers

SIR: The great Durant controversy cannot last forever, and I can hardly blame you if you choose to leave Mr. Morris Cohen, the last champion, in possession of the field. In one form or another, however, this acknowledgment is due him. . . . Part of Mr. Cohen's remarks are entirely inept, and part are entirely true. Both parts are irrefutable. . . . My quarrel is not with what he puts in but with what he leaves out: with his implied assumption that no two things can be true at the same time!

. . . I ask the Cohen school to grant only what they have really not denied: First, the prophetic insight and fervor which Mr. Durant is peculiarly concerned with, are more important, and more philosophical, than the page references which he is accused of garbling (although, of course, like Mr. Cohen, I should like the page references to be right, too). Second, the value of Mr. Durant's book does not depend upon, nor should it be criticized by, the strait standards applicable to a tome intended for professional use. (This proper assumption, incidentally, was the one upon which the book was quite generously reviewed by the Journal of Philosophy, a responsible technical organ. The petty flaws were flaunted elsewhere, by fledglings anxious, perhaps, to pirouette before less sophisticated company.) Third, if this concession is too great, then Mr. Durant, in spite of his popularity, ought to be accorded at least *as much* tolerance as more pretentious and less popular historians. That is, slip-ups and differences of interpretation that would readily be forgiven Windelband or Ueberweg, Erdmann or Zeller or Höffding, ought not to be abhorred as total depravity in Durant.

On the other side, I willingly concede to Mr. Cohen what, so far as I can make out, he is most anxious for. First, I admit that Mr. Durant . . . has probably made no more solid and official contribution to professional philosophy than has Mr. Cohen. . . . Second, I admit that some of Mr. Durant's works can be purchased for the unscholarly sum of five cents, and that "The Story of Philosophy" has sold in the unscholarly quantities of "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes" (criteria, however, which seem to me hardly unequivocal). Third, Mr. Durant is no more infallible than the Pope. He has no doubt fallen into some historical as well as typographical errors—a serious indictment, I should say, only upon the Sears-Roebuck-catalogue conception of philosophy. Fourth, if philosophy is a guild secret, Mr. Durant has indeed betrayed his brother Ph. D.'s. Like James and Dewey, Bergson and Bertrand Russell, Eddington and Whitehead and Haldane, he has done something to make philosophy popular—perhaps more popular than Mr. Cohen has, the advertisement of whose Trade School lecture on "American Philosophy and Religion" (for which I honor him) appears seven pages beyond his indignant letter. Fifth, I agree that Mr. Durant is guilty of "smart-Aleckisms" (if you like the phrase) which are a bit unfair—on those egalitarian principles by which clever persons ought to be muzzled, and everybody compelled to start at scratch, to memorize the textbooks.

More seriously, sixth, I, too, insist that, *ceteris paribus*, the original and laborious spirit who invents and creates is infinitely superior to the genial and talented person who popularizes his creations, just as the latter is superior to the person who does neither. Finally, although Mr. Cohen's concluding sentence is, as it stands, not susceptible to precise interpretation, I think I can understand and sympathize with its intention. For I also solemnly concur that ignorance, of any variety, is a deformity and a mutilation, and any palliation of or complacence with ignorance is the most deeply rooted and thorough form of insanity. . . .

One would think a philosopher's task is to see as much of a controversial situation at once as possible, and not as little. When he does the latter, he exhibits that mean futility of learning which is a far worse betrayal of wisdom than my indiscretions or Mr. Schapiro's.

I happen, by the way, to believe that real epistemology, and metaphysics, in James' sense, are the crowning adventure of the genius of life. I tried not to let this opinion make me blind to or resentful of the truth which Durant was managing to express in his disparagement of them. DONALD CARY WILLIAMS.

Berkeley, California.

Student Friendship for China

SIR: On April 27, a group of students at the University of Washington, after listening to speakers on the Chinese situation, passed a resolution condemning American foreign policy in regard to China as being unsuccessful in its avowed aim, that of protecting American lives and property, as being contrary to American ideals and traditions, as violating the rules of justice and fair play, and as tending to involve the United States in foreign wars. We requested withdrawal of American Marines and naval forces from China.

We decided to form a permanent organization which should try to get into communication with groups in other colleges having like aims. We hope it may be possible to form a nation-wide organization of students working for peace with China. If desired, we might later form a more permanent organization working for peace with all countries.

Our group has no other aim except peace with China. It is made up of political liberals, economic radicals, Christian idealists, and conservatives opposed to war for business reasons.

Will any group or individual interested write to William Roberts, Chairman of the Students Emergency Committee for Peace with China. Address: 4045 Second Avenue N. E., Seattle, Washington. WILLIAM ROBERTS.

Seattle, Washington.

The Courteous Single-Taxer

SIR: *Although I do not suppose you will publish this, I can*not help calling attention to the dishonest persistence with which the New Republic's writers harp on over-population—as in the issue of May 18. E. M. Patterson—"the population density [of England] is nearly 500 per square mile; over one-half to two-thirds of the food supply must be imported." If it were 500, then with an average family of only four, there would be over five acres per family.

Meanwhile, two-fifths of Scotland is in deer parks; and the most of British land is wholly uncultivated; much of it unused.

I think they, and probably you, are afraid to mention the remedy, or the "over-population" of land-holders.

It seems to me to show very little confidence in the truth of socialism to bolster it with lies like that. BOLTON HALL.

New York City.

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A Frenchman on America

America Comes of Age, by André Siegfried. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. 358 pages. $3.

THIS is a survey of America by a distinguished French publicist, who visited America in 1898 on a trip around the world, and again during the World War on one of the numerous commissions of observation sent abroad to spread the holy evangel. According to the translators, he is "an unprejudiced economist and sociologist." The volume falls into three parts. The first covers the ethnic situation: racial origins, religions, color problems, immigration, the melting pot, and race conflicts. The second deals with the economic scene: labor, industrial methods, economic independence, foreign loans, world trade, and monetary policy. The third surveys the political complex: the several parties, relations with England and France, and Asiatic questions. Then there is a concluding chapter on the antithesis between European and American.

In the preparation of this volume, it is evident from every page, M. Siegfried has traveled widely, observed closely, recorded faithfully, and discerned cleverly. Though not so loaded with learning as the works of de Tocqueville and Bryce, the book has neither the flatulent philosophy of the former nor the arid banality of the latter, representing in this respect a distinct advance in realism. Naturally, the chapters and sections vary in depth and excellence, but on the whole it is a book of significance which ought to be read by all Americans who have left the a b c class.

If, at one's peril, one should attempt to grasp the animus and summarize the conclusions of this work, the scheme would run somewhat as follows. With reference to racial issues, there is a mortal collision between the Nordic Protestants, who are hard, money-loving, and crass, and the non-Nordic elements—Catholic, Jewish, and what not, the latter all heirs of "a magnificent civilization" in Europe, somewhat given to liberalism but showing a tendency to conform to mass production. The herd sentiment tends to engulf America, throwing her into violent contrast with the liberty-loving Latin (including presumably the Fascisti). Prohibition is a product of smug Puritanism and efficiency, is good for business (to use the American style), and is likely to remain, in some form, a long time. Liberty of opinion and person is disappearing, especially in the West and South, where anything but straight-laced fundamentalism is challenged on all sides. The American press is well tied to capitalist support, and editors are circumspect. America is swollen with wealth, obsessed by mass production, and the destiny of the country is at stake in the dispute over the candidacy of Al Smith. There is a real Japanese peril on the Pacific Coast. There is a fair working basis for a limited coöperation between American and British imperialisms, but America never, never, can understand the soul of France. Such a summary, of course, does an injustice to M. Siegfried's work, for his volume is packed with facts and made to sparkle with shrewd, often penetrating, and sometimes misleading judgments.

On the point of Franco-American relations, which, presumably, this book was written to illuminate, M. Siegfried writes with dignified reserve, but with a certain air of pained surprise. He tells his readers that "after the armistice the French made the mistake of thinking they could bring into practical discussion the comradeship which the American had felt for a while. . . . From the moment that the Americans refused to admit that they benefited from the military efforts of the Allies, and especially of the French, they denied the moral equality between the brothers-in-arms." Although some American readers will wonder why M. Siegfried expected any "morality" from a nation so given to material things and so wanting in spiritual qualities, they may be moved to remind him that President Wilson proposed taking the United States into the World War early in 1916 on the basis of "a clean peace"—without offering any spoils to the Entente participants; that, since the late adventure in comradeship, the American people have been voraciously reading huge tomes on the war origins, and have been suffering from some resentment over the way in which they were unmercifully gulled by the Entente prophets of the higher morality; and that many Americans think that England and France owe this country an apology for the continuous and mendacious propaganda carried on during the early years of the World War. Hence, if this view is correct, a discharge of the French debt at par would not be violating any moral principles known on this side of the water. Any ill-will between the United States and France is to be deeply regretted, but if the American people are to be regarded as "materialist" and the French as "moral," then an adjustment of the planes of negotiation must be difficult.

The real gravamen of M. Siegfried's case is that America, more than any of the "magnificent" European civilizations, has an obsession with "tangible and material accomplishments." This is the ancient song. It has been repeated so many times that any sophomore in historical studies can sing it to a saxophone. As a matter of fact, is it true? Where are the data, what are the criteria by which to test such a declaration? When a writer tells us that America has produced no great art and very few first-rate thinkers to measure against Europe's best, we can understand and consent; but is there any way of proving that the soil tillers, laborers, merchants, capitalists, landlords, priests, journalists, and warriors of Europe do not chase the material good things of this life to the limit of their abilities and the limit of their environmental opportunities? There is certainly abundant proof that they do not surrender to religion, education, and missionary effort anything like the amount of hard cash which the materialistic Americans do. After all, what is "materialism"? It is a definite term in the history of thought, but, in journalistic usage, utterly meaningless. The present reviewer flatly denies that America is more materialist than any European country, in the sense that, considering the opportunities, no larger proportion of the total human energy in this country is devoted to acquiring material goods than in any European country. The burden of proof rests upon those who make the charge, and pepper shots from M. Siegfried's journalistic gun are simply pepper shots.

Moreover, when a sophisticate from a "magnificent" civilization asks us to roar with laughter at a quotation from Bryan's testimony at Dayton, Tennessee, declaring a belief in miracles (no matter how ridiculous) and then, almost in the same breath, invites us to contemplate the superior wisdom of the Holy Roman Catholic Church, with its miracles, saints' bones, blood of martyrs, and index of forbidden books, we may be permitted a gentle dissent. If there is any creed proclaimed and professed in the hinterland of America that does not derive straight from the literature delivered by the Mother Church, then the present reviewer would like to know what it is. No doubt a Forty-Gallon Baptist of New York City is quite a different animal from a learned and skeptical priest of Paris who thinks the Church "is good for the people"—a phrase which the present writer has heard a hundred times from ghostly lips

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under a doubting skull—but, with respect to their essential creeds for publication and popular consumption, it must be said that the Hard-Shell Baptist makes no bigger demand on the imagination than the Roman Catholic. If anything, it is the two-seed-in-the-pod believer who is to be forgiven for taking seriously a thousand things which the Catholic Church has been proclaiming for centuries. Likewise, when it is intimated that there is more liberty (except on the liquor question) in the Catholic Church than in the Congregational, Methodist, or Baptist Church, dissent may also be allowed—with a reference to the Catholic doctrine that the Roman Church is The One True Church, accepting toleration only as a necessity—with a reference to bulls, syllabuses, indexes, and all the other paraphernalia for the suppression of opinion. This is not intended to be a criticism of the Catholic Church or any other claim on a monopoly of the roads to heaven, but a counter-citation in the interest of fairness and balance.

M. Siegfried is not unaware of the excellencies of his own culture, and, with that delicacy which characterizes the French mind, he occasionally refers to it. On page 20 he adverts to "the individualism of the Gaul and the intellectual realism of our Latin culture." The immigrants who come to America lose "the rich heritage of magnificent civilizations." The Frenchman cannot enter into the spirit of American herd psychology. "The idea that his personality is being constantly suppressed is almost painful to a Latin. He cannot comprehend the Calvinist point of view that the group and not the individual is the social unit"—rather a good joke considering the fact that Jean Chauvin was born in Picardy and educated at Paris, Orléans, and Bourges, and the further fact that the English at home and in America have never taken to that French creed on the wholesale principle. "Those [Americans] who understand and love the soul of France are rare exceptions. They are generally people who have been wounded in their own country by principles and methods to which their temperaments are not suited." After all, "France's best points escape the hasty observations of the passing tourist, for the refinements of her civilization do not lie in telephones or trains and so escape the notice of simple folk who are overanxious about creature comforts." Finally, Europe "can still appreciate free and disinterested thought and spiritual joys which can be obtained only by renouncing comfort and fortune."

Indeed, it seems that the contrast between Europe and America is "the contrast between industrial mass production which absorbs the individual for its material conquests, as against the individual considered not merely as a means of production and progress but as an independent ego." Not content with this large and sweeping assertion, M. Siegfried goes on: "From this unusual aspect we perceive certain traits that are common to the psychology of both Europe and the Orient. So the discussion broadens until it becomes a dialogue, as it were, between Ford and Gandhi." If it would not be showing a crass materialistic spirit, the present reviewer, with due reverence for France, the mother of civilization, might point out that in such a dispute M. Gandhi would probably have some difficulty in discovering profound spiritual differences between M. Poincaré and Mr. Coolidge, between the use of Annamese troops to preserve French loot in China and the use of American Marines in the interest of "law and order" in Haiti, between the conduct of French authorities in Asia Minor and American authorities in Santo Domingo, between the Paris banker and the New York stock-broker, between the editor of Le Temps and the editor of the Times, and so on. Perhaps. Still, since the soul of America is easily discovered by an elevated economist like M. Siegfried, and the soul of France can only be disclosed to the possessor of a peculiar cultural clairvoyance, it would be improper for anyone in the United States to traverse his verdict.

CHARLES A. BEARD.

Real and Artificial Folk-Song

Singing Soldiers, by John J. Niles; Illustrated by Margaret Thornley Williams. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 171 pages. $3.

Fine Clothes to the Jew, by Langston Hughes. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 89 pages. $2.

THE army aviators used to describe their life as one of intense idleness varied by moments of violent fear. To Lieutenant Niles, however, it occurred while he was flying in France that someone should collect the songs of the A. E. F.; whereupon, rejecting his portion of idleness, he set about the task himself. The result is "Singing Soldiers," and, deplorably, it is the only existing musical record of our European adventure. It is not what he first intended, for he soon discovered that, for anything save echoes from the music-halls, the best pickings were to be gathered among the Negro soldiers; he found in the end that he had made a contribution to Afro-Americana. There is reason, however, to believe both that there was material for a book in the songs of the white troops, and that the author, so far as his published volume goes, was in no position to do more than to skim the surface of the balladry of the black.

Here, at any rate, are about forty examples safely between boards, with words, music, and generally competent and appropriate accompaniments. Some are musically interesting—see, for instance, "Crap-Shootin' Charley" and a spiritual, doubtless antedating the War, "He's a Burden-Bearer"—some are indifferent, but, as is the rule with folk-song, none is despicable. As in the case of their Southern prototypes, their verse tends to be rather streaky, but they are well up to standard. An obituary on "The Jackass What Was Named Old Henry" (and sat down on a hand-grenade) is entirely delightful; there are ten new verses for the immortal "Must I Hesitate?" and there are isolated golden thoughts of which the most startling is:

> I'd rather be pimpin' for one-eyed Kate,
> An' do a first-class job at a cut-price rate,
> Than tote a gun in this man's war . . .

There is a sort of litany of such observations as:

> Oh, chicken-foot grass, you points three ways to heaven,
> Oh, chicken-foot grass, won't never be bad any mo'
>
> Oh, lightnin'-bug, don't you burn yo' pants (etc.)

and a good variant on an old theme in the spiritual,

> Done seed an angel in a dream—
> Dere was a ring aroun' de moon—
> Said I'se goin' home in a cloud of steam,
> An' it can't come true too soon!

and there are plenty of typical comments on surrounding circumstances:

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Don't waste yo' time wond'ring if each shell's a dud,
'Cause it only takes one to curdle yo' blood.

"Singing Soldiers" would be a better song-book without its discursive reminiscences and general comment, and a better war diary without the songs; but its writer deserves credit for his main purpose, and for the measure in which he has succeeded in that purpose in the face of difficulties.

To this reviewer, the most interesting portion of Mr. Langston Hughes' book is his dialect verse, and especially the seventeen poems in the manner of the Negro folk-blues, of which he offers far the best concise description in print:

> The *Blues,* unlike the *Spirituals,* have a strict poetic pattern: one long line repeated and a third line to rhyme with the other two. Sometimes the second line in repetition is slightly changed and sometimes, but very seldom, it is omitted. The mood of the *Blues* is almost always despondency, but when they are sung people laugh.

The last sentence is remarkable for what it leaves unsaid, for commentators on the blues, including the reviewer, have expressed overdefinite conclusions on the state of mind they represent. Their psychology, or their philosophy, if any, is in fact too complex to fit into any single pigeon-hole such as that of bravery, humility, optimism, "making the best of things," or, since they presuppose no audience, exhibitionism or appeal to sympathy. Although the gusto in their best phrases is unmistakable, even the comfort of having well stated one's grievance will not invariably explain them. For one thing, the singer has quite frequently disguised a real trouble and built his blues on one which is quite fictitious. For another, there has been a curious phenomenon of sympathetic coöperation, which is implied in Mr. Hughes' "Misery": a honky-tonk pianist has been approached by a woman with the request: "My man's lef' me—gimme a blues," and straightway her obscure need has been supplied on such material as she has furnished:

Oh, Sis Kate's lost her rider, so she got de blues . . .

The long and short of the matter is that the spirit of the blues, which, unlike their "pattern," is not peculiar to them in American Negro folk-song, can be defined only in terms of their creators themselves: unlettered people who know an inner necessity to sing of their contacts with life, and whose stream of thought takes characteristic jumps and turns, sometimes diverting to others and sometimes, pleasantly, to themselves.

Mr. Hughes' thought need not follow the channel which in those instinctive singers produces such jumps and turns, but at his pleasure it is able to do so. It is still his thought, not theirs, so that he expresses the feelings of the porters, elevator boys, Harlem prostitutes and Memphis bad men into whose shoes he momentarily steps, with an explicitness and coherence which would be beyond most of them; and the resulting absence, in his work, of the streakiness which has been mentioned above, at once takes it out of the category of mere pastiche. It is apparently out of the same ability, and consequent desire, to be explicit, that he resorts to the anomaly of a blues *sequence* forming a single poem. Yet the reviewer finds in this volume but a single line which—since he has never, in his experience, encountered in folk-song a similar assertion that "A *is* B," instead of "A is like B"—he ventures to believe incongruous:

De railroad bridge's a sad song in de air.

These experiments derive both from spirituals and from secular song, but from only a limited class of the latter. There is none corresponding to the pure fancy of the folk-dance:

Popped ma whip—*Sangaree!*
Popped it loud—*Sangaree!*
Whip got tangled—*Sangaree!*
Behind a cloud—*Sangaree!*

Popped ma whip—*Sangaree!*
Popped it strong—*Sangaree!*
Whip got tangled—*Sangaree!*
In de wagon-tongue—*Sangaree!*

and there is little to suggest the faint ambiguous melancholy of the folk-blues:

Oh, de big boat blowed fo' Memphis, but she tuhned aroun' . . .
She struck high water, an' she went on down

but one does find Hughes' vein in another anonymous verse:

You don't love me, honey—you don' need to lie . . .
But de day you leaves me, dat's de day you die

His people are immediately conscious of specific and personal wants, inconveniences and designs, and it is from the depths that they raise their various voices:

. . . I hates dem rinney yaller gals
An' I wants my Albert back. . . .

Gonna buy me a rose-bud An' plant it at ma back door . . .
So when I'm dead they Won't need no flowers from de store.

I ain't gonna mistreat ma Good gal any more,
I'm just gonna kill her Next time she makes me sore. . . .
I brought her from de South An' she's goin' on back
Else I'll use her head for a Carpet tack.

Gonna buy me a knife with a Blade ten inches long . . .
Shall I carve ma self or That man that done me wrong?

Verse of this character should be made complete and its rhythms brought out by music such as the author must have had in mind as he wrote, and it is pleasant to record that there is actually a "Golden Brown Blues" by Hughes and Handy, containing the verse, reminiscent of Van Vechten's Harlem novel:

If I hits the numbers, I'm tellin' you the fac's . . .
Gonna get a Golden Brown with my income tax.

Mr. Hughes' range is broader than the scope of this review has indicated; quotations could be multiplied so as to bring out, among other things, his quick sensitiveness to any manifestation of beauty or ugliness, or the exceeding bitterness of some of his reflections. But he has much left to say, he is consistently saying it to better effect, and the variety of his considerable qualities is unlikely to want for critics to number them.

ABBE NILES.

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Vera Figner

Memoirs of a Revolutionist, by Vera Figner. New York: International Publishers. 319 pages. $3.

VERA FIGNER spent twenty years in the Fortress of Schlüsselborg—that alone is enough to mark her as a great human being, as a singular rock of hope and unquenchable courage. To stand Schlüsselborg for twenty years and live, in spirit as well as in body, was the luck of only the stoutest of her fellow terrorists. "Minakov and Myshkin were shot for making a protest; Klimenko hanged himself; Grachevsky burned himself to death [by pouring kerosene over his body and lighting it]; Yuvachev, Schedrin and Konashevich went insane; Yurkovsky died, and Pokhitonov went insane and died. . . . Sofia Ginsburg cut her throat. She could not bear more than one month of the isolation that we had endured for years."

The greater part of these memoirs, and the most interesting, is occupied with the years in prison. Of her earlier years, of the terrorist wing's campaign of assassination, Vera Figner speaks hurriedly and generally, pausing only occasionally to make some event real by sketching in the necessary detail. As a rule, the first third of the narrative is well represented by such items as these:

> Humanity and magnanimity are incompatible with violence. . . . The government and the revolutionary party . . . vied with one another in corrupting everything and everyone around them. . . .
>
> On the 5th of February, 1880 . . . a terrible explosion occurred at the moment when the imperial family entered the dining-room. . . . Fifty soldiers were mutilated and killed. . . . But the royal family remained unhurt.
>
> Society, at any rate its more intelligent element, greeted our activity with great enthusiasm.

A true terrorist, she cuts clearly through to the end in view, regardless of the innocent heads which may fall by the wayside. It is planned to assassinate Panyutin, a "rough and coarse" police official, a cog in the system by which "vast numbers of people were exiled in a most arbitrary and revolting fashion." But there is no admission that the murder of fifty unlucky soldiers was, in its way, perhaps a little revolting also.

A woman of narrow mind and stern, magnificent heart, twenty years of unspeakable privation and solitude shook her at times terribly, but could not break her. Among the annalists of prison life she does not rank at the top, being, for a Russian, rather stiff and vague of memory, but the swift account of those twenty years is cumulatively vivid and terrifying. And there are little touches that one cannot forget: how the first person she became angry with, long after her arrest, was a comrade who had carelessly stifled a plant in her tiny grass-plot; how it felt to see the night sky and the stars again after five years; how, when (eight years later), her favorite uncle died, she "felt merely regret," but when her tame bird died she "cried for a whole fortnight"; how she met her brothers and sisters again after twenty years—"delicate young girls" and a "rosy-cheeked boy" now become a "robust, mature engineer" and "stout, sedate ladies, mothers of families. . . ."

> That night [after the visit was over] I felt on the verge of insanity. My head was filled with words . . . names of objects—names and names. They poured forth, like white crumpled papers, tumbling out of a bag that is being shaken. . . .

ROBERT LITTELL.

Twilight Sleep

Twilight Sleep, by Edith Wharton. New York: D. Appleton and Company. $2.50.

AS Mrs. Wharton grows older, her touch becomes lighter and her attitude more tolerant. "The House of Mirth" was a tragedy; "The Custom of the Country" a ferocious satire. "Twilight Sleep," which deals with a later New York, the New York of today, but a society of which Mrs. Wharton seems to disapprove hardly less than of the New York of yesterday and of which her picture, in its implications, is by no means reassuring, remains a comedy. Mrs. Wharton's "twilight sleep" is the smoke-screen of "new psychology," Hindu theosophy and Russian mysticism which the too efficient mother of a New York family interposes between herself and the tragic problems of her own household. Her daughter-in-law, the bronze-and-ivory Lita, evades these problems in another way—through night-clubs, drinking and love-affairs—while the sensible, conscientious and disillusioned daughter bears the brunt and pays the price which the others shirk.

It is, from one point of view, so agreeable to find so old a friend as Mrs. Wharton coming at last to lose something of her old harshness, to contemplate the wrongheadedness of humanity with comparative equanimity, that we are hardly disposed to complain if her novels become proportionately less vivid. At most, perhaps, we may regret that she should have lived so long abroad that her pictures of life in America have a tendency to seem either shadowy or synthetic. Thus, the New York of "Twilight Sleep," though it has been got up with perfect competence and interpreted with great intelligence, has nothing of the solidity, the poetic reality, of the New York of her earlier novels. The beautiful and irresponsible Lita, who dances at the "Cubist cabaret" and almost goes off to Hollywood under the auspices of a movie magnate named Klawhammer, is extremely well observed but somehow rather slighted. We feel that Mrs. Wharton has had to make an effort in order to compass Lita. We are mostly made to watch the action through the eyes of the self-deluding mother and the conscientious daughter, and we are continually being excited in expectation of the catastrophe which will upset the equilibrium of the household. But when the catastrophe finally occurs, it is not quite dramatic enough. The hushing up and glossing over of the scandal are, of course, of the essence of Mrs. Wharton's intention: her point and, as it were, her surprise, lie precisely in the capacity of her characters for continuing to evade the situation even when it has apparently brought the roof down on their heads. Yet the result, from the reader's point of view, is no less a little disappointing. Lita is hardly given her day in court: we have far too much of the mother and the daughter, who, after all, are more or less inactive. We are also, at first, allowed to watch the action through the eyes of the self-made father, who falls in love with his stepson's wife (that is, with Lita); but as soon as it is certain that he has succumbed, our view of his consciousness is shut off and we are thereafter excluded from his company.

In any case, however, Mrs. Wharton has written a most entertaining novel and a distinguished piece of social criticism. It is a striking proof of Mrs. Wharton's insight that "Twilight Sleep" should be something other than (what with many novelists, even of high gifts, we have to be content) a mere paler repetition of the author's earlier characters and situations. She has really, to a surprising extent, renewed herself with the new age. EDMUND WILSON.

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A Norwegian Trilogy

The Cross, translated from the Norwegian of Sigrid Undset. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. $3.

WITH "The Cross," Sigrid Undset completes her remarkable trilogy of medieval Norway, the first two volumes of which, "The Bridal Wreath" and "The Mistress of Husaby," had brought the heroine to the threshold of middle age. Kristin Lavransdatter is in no sense an epic character, a symbolic figure such as we have come to expect from modern Scandinavian authors. Her development from waywardness and caprice to steadfastness in the face of misfortune, from intolerance to mellowness, is a not unusual human phenomenon, and it is described without recourse to the glamor which the period of the novel might well have afforded to a more romantic novelist. The work glows with a finer light than those flashes thrown off by romanticized history. The theme of the book is the illusion of earthly happiness; the illusion of happiness chased through a thousand sins and desires, disappointments and rallyings, to be relinquished at last, almost with a sigh of relief, in the serenity of at least one conviction: that no dream worth anything to the spirit of man can ever be realized.

It is this theme, tragic in the noblest sense, which Sigrid Undset plays upon Kristin Lavransdatter as upon an instrument. To carry the metaphor further, we might liken the trilogy to a concerto, Kristin being the solo instrument against a background of the full orchestra. And from that point of view, the work is well orchestrated; the writer handles the world of personalities which she calls into being to accompany Kristin with clarity and verisimilitude. Of these characters, the most important are Kristin's father, whose gentle benignity comes back to her after a turbulent lifetime spent in rejecting that very quality; her husband, Erlend, who destroys her dream of happiness in love; Simon, the faithful suitor whom she has jilted and on whom, at last, she must rely even for the salvation of the man who supplanted him; and her children, who shatter her dream of maternal happiness, and doing away thus with the last vestige of her illusion, drive her to the nunnery where, in contemplation of eternity, she ends her days.

With the substitution of mystic serenity for the illusion of earthly happiness, a brief afterglow flashes palely across the sorry wreckage of her life.

> Again there came upon her that strange, feverish, inner vision—the stream seemed to show her a picture of her own being; thus had she hurried restlessly through the waste of these earthly years, foamed up in turbulent chafing at every stone in her path—it was but weakly and fitfully and palely that the everlasting light could mirror itself in her life. . . . She kissed the cross her father had given her, humbly thankful to feel that, in spite of all, in spite of her ungoverned spirit, yet had it been granted to her restless heart to catch a faint gleam of the love she had seen mirrored in her father's soul, clear and still, even as the brightness of the sky was thrown back now by the great still moorland tarn.

Sigrid Undset's method is devoid of shrillness and dramatization. She writes patiently, and she must be read patiently. She never once rattles the stage thunder of history; though the transition period between paganism and Christianity in Scandinavia was thunderous enough (*vide* Folke Fribytter)! She never subordinates her characters to the events in which they take part. The only works which occur to me as even approximately similar to this are, in a few respects, "Marius the Epicurean," and, in many respects, "Jean-Christophe." Furthermore, and I do not say this merely to be paradoxical, the Kristin Lavransdatter trilogy is one of the most masculine works of recent years.

In view of this positive, or objective, quality, I find it regrettable that the translator feels called upon to "poeticize" the style of the book. In any prose such fancy contractions as *'twas* and *o'er* are out of place. In a work as straightforward and sinewy as "The Cross," they are more than a little annoying.

ROBERT HILLYER.

Reactionary or Prophet

Critical Essays, by Osbert Burdett. New York: Henry Holt and Company. 169 pages. $2.

THE usual book-jacket advertisement yields a formula somewhat as follows: a deliberately oblique stimulus which sets up in the prospective buyer a powerful yet incoherent response. The copy-writer, however, who contrived the blurb for the present volume by the English critic, Osbert Burdett, has reversed the terms of the formula: baffled by the contents of the book and so reduced to incoherence, he fell into a most illuminating betrayal of his actual, if unconcerned, judgment of Mr. Burdett. He describes the most important essay in the book as a "quaint reflection on the effect of printing on literature." The essay in question is simply a rational examination of certain tendencies in literature since the seventeenth century: tendencies due to the influence of popular education on the quality of belles lettres; the essay is informed throughout with the aristocratic tradition of humanism. But this spirit is so foreign to the spirit of the age, that the blurb-writer, for the moment, occupied the vatic tripod and delivered himself of his *zeitgeist*, as if the age spoke from the depths of sleep.

Mr. Burdett may well be found quaint. The Enlightenment took over the word humanism, which has since, remarkably enough, blossomed into "service." With the two centuries of this adventure in semantics Mr. Burdett has nothing to do. As a humanistic reactionary he remains untouched by the compromise of the nineteenth century; nor has he mastered the abstract terminologies of modern criticism, which are being devised against the confusion of that compromise. There is possibly much that he would not understand at all. One supposes that he has instinctively narrowed his scope in order to preserve the integrity of his tradition. His humanism is pure. But it could not be otherwise than thin, for Mr. Burdett is a humanist living in a humanitarian society. (The distinction is important.) When the humanistic tradition, having lost its roots in a prevailing culture, ceases to be a form of direct response to the age, it may expand into humanitarianism. Or it may harden into a system of abstract ideas: the pseudo-humanist, like Mr. More, will not admit his failure in comprehensiveness, and he thus opposes those aspects of the age which do not, somewhat mechanically, fit into the shell of his abstractions. But the traditional virtue of humanism has been that of the Catholic Church—it is interpretative and Procrustean; Erasmus did not scold his age, he assimilated it.

This method of dealing with contemporary problems, which defines them automatically in terms of the past, is for some reason losing its effectiveness. The breach between the contemporary spirit and the aristocratic spirit,

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out of which humanism grew, is too wide; the two spirits will not fuse. And it is not, therefore, astonishing that Mr. Burdett is serenely detached from the chief problems of contemporary letters. Ease, scope, largeness of view are not attainable by the critic who clings to these discredited principles: the authority of an aristocratic and hence, to the masses, esoteric literature; and its converse—illiteracy for the populace. Since the milieu deprives such ideas of range, Mr. Burdett writes sensitively and intelligently on scattered subjects, none of which can be taken far: "The Art of Mr. Chaplin," "The Poems of Alice Meynell," "Shelley the Dramatist," "The Passion Play," "Nathaniel Hawthorne." These discussions Mr. Burdett does not approach as a contemporary. Nevertheless, the question is open whether he is a reactionary or, *mutatis mutandis*, a prophet.

ALLEN TATE.

Common Sense on the Far East

Our Far Eastern Assignment, by Felix Morley. New York: Doubleday, Page and Company. 185 pages. $2.

THIS book has a lucidity, a calm balance and a freedom from partisan prepossessions seldom to be found in writing on the Far East, and all the more valuable now. Mr. Morley was sent to Japan, China and the Philippines by the Baltimore Sun, to acquaint himself at first hand with subjects on which, as the United States becomes increasingly involved in Pacific affairs, any responsible American newspaper must be increasingly informed. His stay was necessarily short, too short for more than a rapid survey of major movements and tendencies, but he returned, nevertheless, with a grasp of essentials and an imaginative insight into the relations between them.

The chapters which have to do with China are of greatest interest now. They were written before the Nationalist movement had gone far enough to cause international complications, but all the basic elements in the present situation were already visible to the discerning. It is to Mr. Morley's credit that he did see them and appraised them correctly. He gives a succinct statement of China's demands and a clear analysis of the psychology which makes the Chinese express their insistence on international equality so intransigently. So far from being swayed by club and hotel bromides, as are nine out of ten traveling American newspaper men, he has weighed accurately the Shanghai mind—its arrogance, bigotry and blindness—and the disproportionate influence it has had in bringing on the deadlock we are now in. For it is not so much Chinese extremism as the provincial obscurantism of the British and American wholesale and retail tradesmen in Shanghai that has brought us to the edge of conflict.

The reviewer has read nearly all the books on the Philippine Islands, but never one that in so small a compass presented a fairer statement of the issues between Filipino patriotism and American colonial administration. The case for and against independence is stated without bias—without sentimentality on the one side or rancor on the other. Here also the conventional gossip and standardized ideas of the Manila Elks Club and American Chamber of Commerce are given their proper weight. They are ignored, except in so far as they have contributed to the Filipinos' quite understandable desire to be quit of a pushful and insolently patronizing Babbittry.

NATHANIEL PEFFER.

Two Year-Books

Europa: An Illustrated Year-Book of Europe, 1927. Edited by Michael Farbman, Ramsay Muir and Hugh F. Spender. New York: Harper and Brothers. 642 pages. $5.

IT is the part of wisdom for reviewers not to get too excited about volumes intended for annual publication, until more than one has been produced in the series: the mortality rate in this class is not much lower than it is among the magazines. The second yearly volume of "Europa" has now appeared, and therefore it seems high time to say that this is a desk-book of great usefulness for reference purposes. It has a section for each European country, giving the political, social and economic information which editors, authors and teachers are most likely to need. It gives a "Who's Who" which ought to avert many gray hairs among foreign editors of newspapers and other equally unhappy gentry; there is an admirable series of surveys of special subjects, in their European scope—agriculture, international trade, transport and communication, education; in fact, the only annoying thing about this yearbook is that one misses the gratification of enumerating important omissions. Like the too-perfect stenographer in one of George M. Cohan's plays, it anticipates your every request . . . and I shall lock up my copy securely before this review appears in print.

B. B.

The American Labor Year Book, 1927. Labor Research Department of the Rand School of Social Science. New York: Rand Book Store. 252 pages. $1.50.

THIS useful annual handbook covers a wide field, giving facts about the current economic state of American industry, the distribution of wealth and income, productivity, wages, cost of living and employment, accidents and health hazards, women in industry, child labor, labor organizations and their activities during the year, strikes and lockouts, labor political parties, labor legislation and court decisions affecting labor, civil liberties, workers' education, research and health, labor banking, investment and insurance, coöperation, and labor's international relations. A brief section on labor abroad and a short bibliography conclude the volume.

G. S.

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